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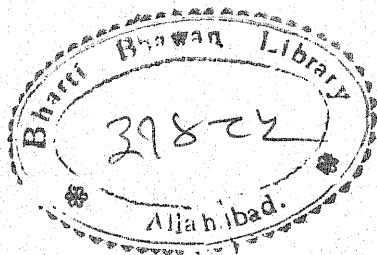
DEMOCRACY AND ITS RIVALS

An Introduction to Modern Political Theories

By
CHRISTOPHER LLOYD, M.A.

On a huge hill,
Cragged and steep, Truth stands, and he that will
Reach her, about must, and about must go;
And what the hill's suddenness resists, win so;
Yet strive so, that before age, death's twilight,
Thy Soul rest, for none can work in that night.

Donne. Satires. III



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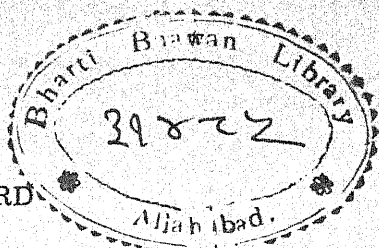
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FOREWORD

EVERYBODY talks politics nowadays. And, as Jeremy Bentham said, 'when we have words in our ears we imagine that we have ideas in our heads.' Unfortunately the terms used in political arguments soon become vague symbols of idolatry or abuse. How many people who read the newspapers really know what is meant by words like 'Imperialism', 'Fascism', 'Socialism', which are so constantly dinned in our ears?

This book has been written to enable the reader of the daily press to find his bearings in the present chaos of contradictory 'isms.' Considerations of space make it impossible to do full justice to the complexity of these political and social ideas. Nor can the answer provided by religion to the questions here propounded be included. The aim has been to show, as simply as the subject permits, how and why democratic theories, together with the new and often rival 'ideologies' abroad to-day, have developed, and what they may be said to imply. In the concluding part some attempt is made to relate our present situation to world history by summarizing various interpretations of the meaning of historical development.

It is impossible to keep one's personal opinions out of a book full of such controversial matter. I hope that my presentation of the political theories current to-day is not unduly coloured by my own prejudices. The more the reader is stimulated into agreement or disagreement with what is here set down, the better will the author have achieved his aim. By presenting the

reader with the raw material in the shape of facts and quotations, the author has tried to encourage him to think out matters for himself and to compare one line of argument with another. Only in such a way is it possible to make the mind of the younger generation impervious to the arts of propaganda; and surely that is the aim of a liberal education in citizenship.

Whatever the shortcomings of a book which covers so wide a field in so short a space, the author will have achieved his aim if the reader gains a few fresh ideas about those opinions which have moulded our civilization in recent times, and is thereby enabled to define his own attitude with a little more accuracy.

For those who wish to pursue the subjects further short lists of books are appended to every chapter; those marked with an asterisk are of a more introductory nature than the others.

I am obliged to the Association for Education in Citizenship for assistance in completing these lists.

Dartmouth,
December, 1937.

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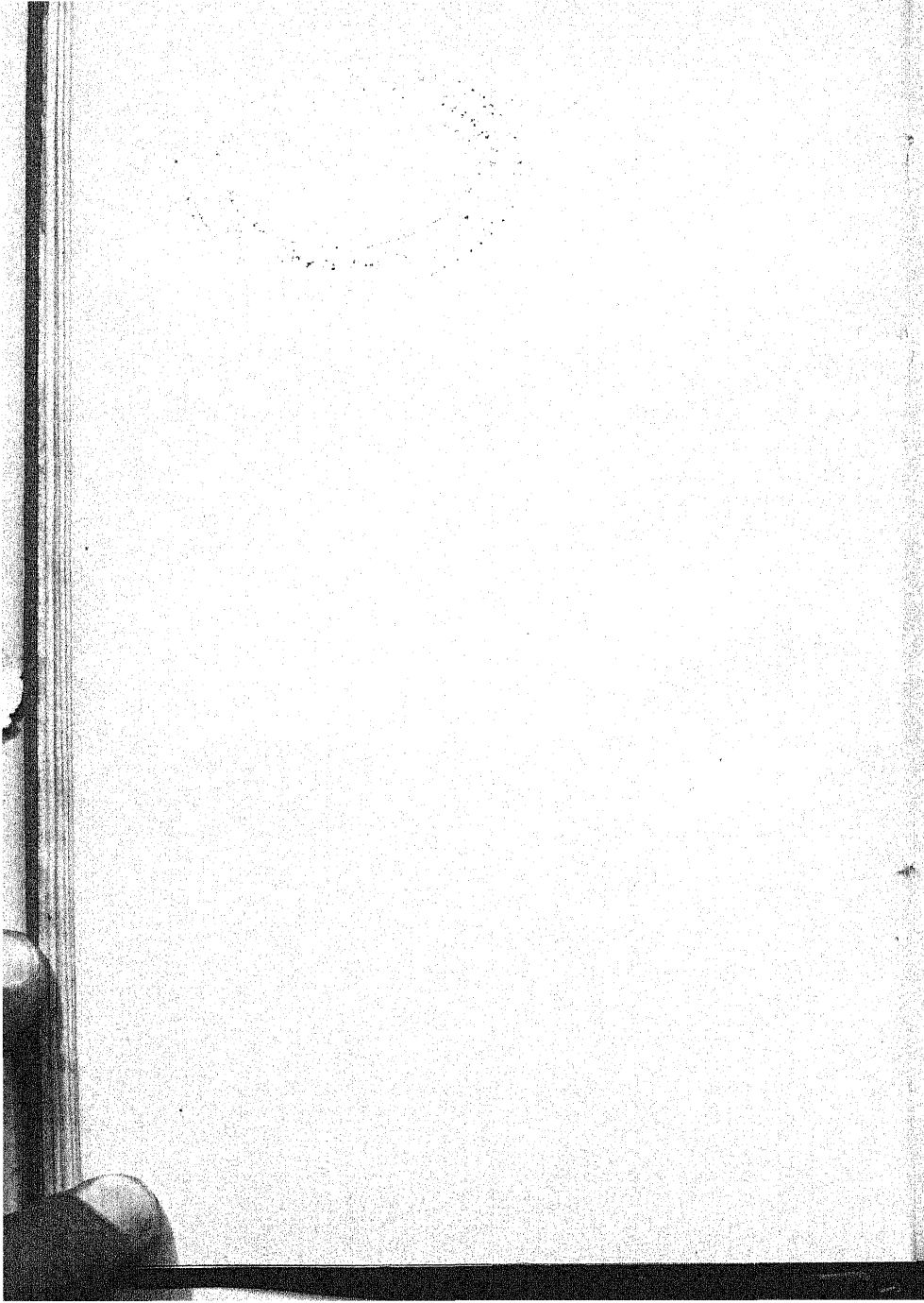
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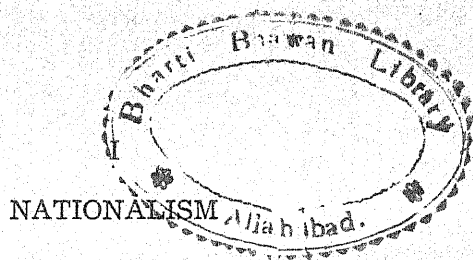
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PART I

THE STATE AND ITS NEIGHBOURS





THE political unit in the modern world is the nation state. How is such a state to be defined and what is the character of its relations to other states? Those are the questions we must ask ourselves first, because Nationalism is the religion of the modern world.

Nationalism may be called a religion because it is rooted in the deepest instincts in man. In modern times it has become a faith as complex and compelling as any religious creed for which men have died or conquered. From its first stirrings at the time of the Reformation it has become the *idée maitresse* of European and American history, the motive of wars and revolutions, particularly in the nineteenth century. Its final triumph was at the Peace Conference in 1919, where the principle that every race group should determine its own future was the only principle upon which all the participants were agreed. The break-up of the Austrian, Turkish and Russian empires, political states whose boundaries had never coincided with the variety of races which composed them, was the logical conclusion of more than a century's development. To-day we are at the cross-roads. Is history going to continue to develop along the lines of Nationalism, and if so, what is to be the nature of the relation between one nation and another?

Before attempting to unravel the complex web of associations called Nationalism it will be as well to

consider a few points in its history from the stage when it emerges in a sense of membership of some primitive tribal group to its appearance, fully armed, as the spectre haunting the modern world.

The sense of tribal solidarity, with its peculiar religion, its symbolic King or God, is nothing more than the raw material out of which Nationalism is composed. Such group-consciousness is not a defined creed, nor has it that superiority complex which marks the existence of a fully developed nation. Just as a tribe is not a state, so a tribe is not a nation: it is not large enough; it is not sufficiently developed; it has not got the self-consciousness which only centuries of a common tradition can give.

In the Ancient World, and in the early civilizations of mankind, we can distinguish only two groups which were conscious of a separate nationality: the Jews and the Greeks. From the earliest times the Jews regarded themselves as a chosen people, 'a people dwelling alone, nor reckoning itself with the nations.' Just as the Jew despised the Gentile and the idolater, so did the Greek despise the 'barbarian.' But as soon as the Roman Empire conquered these peoples the idea of national separatism disappeared for over a thousand years. The Empire had to be cosmopolitan in its aims or it would have ceased to exist. Christianity, too, spread the noble ideal of universal brotherhood; a world in which, said St. Paul, 'there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.'

The tradition of Rome and the tradition of the Church threw a shadow over Europe during the Middle Ages. The ideal of the Empire and the Papacy was still that of a universal state, a *Civitas Dei*, in which there

was a common religion and a common head. That ideal seldom materialized; but Kings, Popes and Emperors did not fight each other on nationalistic grounds. The very word was hardly understood. In the organization of medieval universities there were, for example, four nations at Paris and thirty-five at Bologna; in later times there were but two, those whose home was north of the Alps and those who came from the south.

In two states, however, the idea of nationality began to form. England, by reason of her isolated position and the unitary government imposed on her at the Conquest, was the first to conceive of herself as a distinct national unit. This conception was strengthened by the struggle against Rome and the Hundred Years' War with France. The nationalist Reformation of the Tudors, and the self-dependence bred in defending it against the forces of the Counter Reformation, left England a fully developed nation state, with its own religion, its own government and its own feeling of superiority. A study of the expression of the spirit of patriotism in our literature would prove this. Chaucer knows nothing of it; but how noble and fervent are Milton's words: 'Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing himself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking his invincible locks....'

France, for political reasons, was behind England in its emergence as a nation state. But from a very early date we can discern that feeling that Frenchmen are better than other men which is the true sign of Nationalism. *Dieu, est-il français?* was the title of a German book published a few years ago. *Gesta Dei per Francos* epitomizes the chronicler's view of the Crusades. Their first political pamphleteer, Pierre Dubois, writing

in 1305, has an extremely modern flavour when he claims that Frenchmen have an 'inherent superiority of character' and 'a wiser judgment than other nations; they do not move without thought; they act as right reason would dictate, a quality which we do not see among other folk.'

The Protestant revolts against the universal tradition of the Roman Church gave an immense impetus to the formation of separate units. By the end of the Reformation period most states had felt the first stirrings of Nationalism. Great figures—St. Joan, Hus, Dante had made their appearance; Luther and Machiavelli had provided a political philosophy: the State-Church and the independence of the Prince from any universal laws of morality. But with the exception of Switzerland, Holland, Spain, France and England, other states remained what they were until the nineteenth century—merely geographical expressions. The causes of war in the feudal period were dynastic. In succeeding centuries religious and even economic interests displaced this reason. But in the eighteenth century cosmopolitanism, at least in culture, was still the rule; Voltaire was its symbol; and Lessing¹ could say without being reviled by a hundred pens: 'I have no conception of the love of country and it seems to me at the best a heroic feeling which I am well content to be without.' The Partition of Poland, however, awoke in many serious minds the problems of the rights of weaker peoples. Were peoples to be bought and sold at the bidding of irresponsible monarchs, or had they the right of self-determination? From that date (1772) onwards, countries began to fight as nations, not as families or sects.

¹ German critic and poet. Died 1781.

Nationalism as we know it to-day is the child of the Revolution. But it was begotten in a curious way. The revolutionary doctrines were spread, not in the name of self-determination, but in the name of popular sovereignty; the theories which the ragged armies of the Republic attempted to impose at the point of the bayonet were political, not national. Accordingly, says Lord Acton, 'the national sentiment was not developed directly out of the revolution in which it was involved, but was exhibited first in resistance to it, when the attempt to emancipate had been absorbed in the desire to subjugate, and the republic had been succeeded by the empire. Napoleon called a new power into existence by attacking nationality in Russia, by delivering it in Italy, by governing in defiance of it in Germany and Spain.' The Nationalism which inspired the freedom of such states was therefore a by-product of the Revolution, generated by reaction to despotism, whether in the person of Napoleon or Metternich. The history of the past century confirms the fact that the sentiment of nationality only becomes self-conscious where political oppression strives to repress it.

One of the most important causes for the emergence of Nationalism was the Romantic Movement, itself a part of the general revolutionary upheaval. By the study of the past, by the discovery of early legends and the study of European nations in the stage of primitive societies, a national historical consciousness was brought to birth. The supposed original unity of the German peoples gave an immense impetus to the Nationalist movement in that country. Every country was soon producing national historians who painted the past virtues of their race with the glowing colours of romantic imagination—Michelet, Treitschke, Niebuhr, von

Sybel, etc. And no one who has studied the Greek and Italian revolts will underestimate the influence of the revolutionary romantic poets, amongst whom Byron was laureate.

The story of the growth of the nation states in the last century need not be retold. Nor need we examine in detail the scores of Nationalist theories elaborated in the course of the last hundred years. Two writers, however, the prophets of nationalism, may be mentioned briefly. First, the archpriest of the new religion, Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-72). Whatever his shortcomings as a practical politician, Mazzini was an enormously influential writer, because he wrote with a mystical fervour which inflamed rather than enlightened his readers. His original definition of a nation is straightforward enough: 'By nation we understand the totality of Italians bound together by a common past and governed by the same laws.' But, he soon goes far beyond this. He discovers in each nation a mystic soul, especially created by God, so that the nation itself may be worshipped and served as an emanation of the deity. By a pleasing, if abstract, scheme, based on the theory of the division of labour, he thought each nation possessed certain talents which, taken together, formed the wealth of the human race: English imperialism, German philosophy, French action, and the Italians a combination of the last two. He was convinced that God had set geographical boundaries to separate the nations. 'Evil governments have disfigured the Divine sign. Nevertheless you may still trace it, distinctly marked out—at least so far as Europe is concerned—by the course of great rivers, the direction of the higher mountains, and other geographical conditions.' 'It is unfortunate,' comments Bertrand Russell, 'that he

omitted to tell us what was God's design as regards the Danube, for knowledge on this point might have prevented the Great War.'

To Fichte's *Addresses to the German Nation*, delivered the year after the national humiliation at Jena (1806), we must also attribute great importance, not only in the evolution of Nationalism but because in them lie the germs of Fascism. Fichte is in no doubt about the innate superiority of the Germans—they are 'the pioneers and models for the rest of mankind; to have character and to be a German undoubtedly mean the same.' There can be no doubt that we are in the presence of a very influential Nationalist professor, even though he does not help us to define the sentiment. He is a living influence to-day. He was the first, not merely to instil into the minds of his countrymen an enthusiastic spirit of patriotism, but to suggest the mode of social education which Nazi Germany adopts to-day. 'The new education must consist essentially in this, that it completely destroys freedom of will in the soil which it undertakes to cultivate, and produces on the contrary strict necessity in the decisions of the will, the opposite being impossible. Such a will can henceforth be relied on with confidence and certainty.' The difference between a liberal and a Nationalist education could not be better expressed.

To-day the world is made up of sixty odd states, nearly all of them acutely self-conscious and heavily armed to uphold their respective rights. Even the Chinese have national aspirations nowadays, though the idea is quite alien to their mode of thought. Only 3 per cent of the population of Europe is now living under foreign rule. With the best will in the world it would be impossible to go much further in fulfilling

Mill's demand that 'it is a necessary condition of free institutions that the boundaries of governments should coincide in the main with those of nationalities.' But minorities, even under present conditions, remain extremely vocal. Peace in every continent remains seriously endangered by the existence of independent states, each fearing the depredations of its neighbour. There is a clear alternative before us: the achievement of an international system which reason and science have made possible; or the decline of our own civilization in a welter of contending states.

* * * * *

We are now in a position to disentangle some of the threads which make up the conception of Nationalism. Undoubtedly the basis of the whole idea is that herd instinct which is almost as strong in Man as it is in the bee or the wolf. Man is a gregarious animal, one who fears solitude, prefers to imitate others and instinctively identifies himself with the outlook predominant in his group. As his mind develops he becomes more of an individualist, for independence of judgment is not a primitive characteristic. Only after millions of years of such development does individualism become at all apparent. Primitive man, contrary to the beliefs of the eighteenth-century philosophers, is the most unfree of all men. The noble savage does not run free and lawless in the woods: custom is king with him. 'No human being,' says Frazer, 'is so hidebound by custom and tradition as your democratic savage; in no state of society consequently is progress so slow and difficult. The old notion that the savage is freest of mankind is the reverse of the truth. He is a slave, not indeed to a visible master, but to the past, to the spirit of his dead

forefathers, who haunt his steps from birth to death, and rule him with a rod of iron.'

Things are not so very different with his modern descendant. Scratch a stockbroker and you will still find a savage. Those who have studied the behaviour of crowds show that a crowd, or an excessively group-conscious body, acts in a totally different manner from that of a rational individual. As a flock of birds, actuated by some unconscious social telepathy, will rise and wheel unbidden by any distinguishable leader, crowds and nations in times of crisis will show a unanimity which it would be impossible to predict under normal circumstances. Even in daily life we can find a thousand evidences of our membership of a herd. The tyranny in dress and, what is much worse, in opinion; the general dislike of the eccentric and the intolerance of the new, which characterize the man in the street; his willingness to sacrifice himself in the interests of the group; his susceptibility to leadership; the strange hold which the most nonsensical rumours can take upon his mind—all these things are only too familiar to those whose business is propaganda, advertising or group suggestion. With modern inventions such as the radio, the press and the cinema, the danger of intensive mass propaganda is magnified a thousand times; it has become the supreme danger to those who believe in the liberty of the individual mind. However rational a man may think himself, the voice of the herd controls his conduct. 'Not merely can it make him accept hardship and suffering unresistingly, but it can make him accept as truth the explanation that his perfectly preventable afflictions are sublime'y just and gentle.'¹ In a crisis, when the life of the group is

¹ Trotter. *Instincts of the Herd in War and Peace*. (1919.)

threatened, individual liberty counts for nothing: a fact which is not due to the reactionary policy of a group of tyrants, but to nature herself, whose method it is to stimulate the herd instinct at such a time for the sake of self-preservation.

Another method of welding together millions of individuals into one shape with one thought is to stress the unity of blood which binds men of one race together. But to suggest that the terms Race and Nation are synonymous is both false and absurd. There is more nonsense talked about Race to-day than about any other subject at any other time. The myths thus propagated will not bear a moment's scientific examination. The predominant fantasy at the moment is the Aryan Myth. It was the invention of a Frenchman, le Comte de Gobineau, in the year 1858. Gobineau's wildly unscientific idea is extremely important to-day. It was developed by a Germanized Briton, Houston Chamberlain, who was Wagner's son-in-law, some of whose views would not pass muster with his modern Nazi disciples; for example, his treatment of the Jewish problem, where he speaks of 'the perfectly ridiculous and revolting tendency to make the Jews the general scapegoat for all the vices of our time.'

In modern Germany a thousand pseudo-professors extol the virtues of the Aryan blood, led by Alfred Rosenberg, culture adviser to the Third Reich. 'Judas the Jew betrayed Jesus the German to the Jews' etc., etc. Let us confine ourselves for the moment to Gobineau's main thesis. He sought to prove that 'the White race originally possessed the monopoly of beauty, intelligence and strength' throughout the world. Hence every civilization, including the Chinese, 'derives from the White race, none can exist without its help, and a

society is great and brilliant only so far as it preserves the blood of the noble group that created it, provided that this group itself belongs to the most illustrious branch of our species.' It is interesting to compare this illustration of *l'esprit de peau* with a passage from Hitler's autobiography: 'Cross breeding, and the race degradation which it entails, are the sole causes of the dying out of old civilizations; for men do not perish by losing wars. They perish by the loss of the staying power which is proper to pure blood.'¹

But is there indeed such a thing as Pure Blood? The opinion of scientists is unanimous: there is no evidence for the existence of such a thing, at least in historical times. Ethnologists can distinguish racial types according to this or that feature—hair, colour, shape of skull (long or round); but they all admit that as a result of countless centuries of intermixture the idea that any purity of race still exists is a complete fallacy. Defoe pointed out the truth in 1701, when he made his name with his poem *The True Born Englishman*. In this he showed that there was no such thing, only the product of Briton and Saxon and Roman and Dane and Norman.

'Thus from a mixture of all kinds began
That heterogeneous Thing, an Englishman.'

Before the dawn of history man's tendency to wander over the face of the globe and to marry into strange

¹ Cf., also: 'All that we admire on this earth—science, art, technical skill and invention—is the creative product of a small number of nations, and originally, perhaps, of one single race. All this culture depends on them for its very existence. If they perish they carry with them all the beauty of this earth into the grave.'

tribes had thoroughly confused whatever distinctions there may originally have been between the races of mankind. Within the broad limits laid down by colour, it has become increasingly difficult to distinguish one race from another with any accuracy.

Types such as the White, Black and Yellow races may perhaps be easily distinguished. But owing to tribal migration it is impossible to do more than distinguish three primary types in Europe—the Nordic, Alpine and Mediterranean. It is to the small dark men of the latter type that we owe the basic inventions of our civilization—the use of the plough, the wheel and the art of writing. The word 'Aryan,' so much canvassed to-day, is a complete misnomer. Like the words 'Latin' or 'Celtic' it should only denote the language spoken by certain groups, in this case those of the Russo-Asiatic steppes. In this sense the Bengali, the Greek and the Scandinavian are all Aryans. Even if we confine ourselves to the word 'Teutonic' that term should include the English, Dutch, Scandinavian, French and German nations. Further it is very remarkable that none of the great German geniuses—Goethe, Beethoven, Kant—had even the racial features which a true Nordic should have. Perhaps the Nazi professors realize as much, to judge from a recent pronouncement: 'in the last resort racial membership can be established by nothing but a man's style of living, his character. It is only by the way he acts that we recognize the Nordic, not by the length of his nose or the colour of his eyes.' Modern research has proved up to the hilt Renan's assertion: 'The truth is, there is no pure race. To base politics on an ethnographical analysis is to base it on a chimera.... The attempt to stress racial unity is of recent origin and can be traced to the desire of jingoists

and chauvinists to play on the feelings of pride and hatred of the members of their nationality.¹

It would be impossible to prove the primacy of any race even if it existed. Certain characteristics and fortunate accidents have given colonial pre-eminence to the Anglo-Saxons. But a Frenchman, for example, would hotly deny the superiority of their culture. Whether the black races are naturally inferior, or whether they have simply never had the opportunity to prove their capabilities, cannot be proved. Only on one point are ethnologists agreed: that it is necessary to segregate the three main types of White, Yellow and Black, because race feeling based on colour is nature's method of safeguarding, within extremes, a comparative purity of racial types. This is certainly no excuse for distinctions within the European family, and above all it is no excuse for anti-semitism, a recrudescence of medieval savagery.² Racialism, rather than Nationalism in the ordinary sense of the word, is the most serious danger to world peace because it inculcates a feeling of superiority over other races. Woolly-headed negroes cannot by any alchemy turn themselves into Big Blonde Beasts. Hence Imperialism—the extension of the nation state—is the natural development of racialism. And Cecil Rhodes, with his faith in the innate superiority of the Anglo-Saxon, is its prophet.

What, then, is the relation of Race to Nation? Switzerland, Belgium (Walloons and Flemings) and the U.S.A., that great melting-pot, are examples of

¹ Renan. *Qu'est-ce qu'une Nation?* A jingoist or a chauvinist is an excessively race-proud person.

² In Nazi Germany Jews are 'guests,' without any rights of citizenship. To become an editor of a newspaper, or a member of the Party, a man has to prove Aryan ancestry as far back as 1800.

nations composed of various races. Every nation has its racial minorities, and even within this country murmurs are heard of Welsh and Scottish Nationalism. Race is not to be identified with nation. The truth is, race theories are only developed *after* a common historical tradition has brought to birth the consciousness of the essential unity of a group. As the sole explanation *why* that group was formed they are unscientific and unhistorical.

Another link, equally important in the formation of a nation, is the possession of a common language. But the example of tri-lingual Switzerland proves that such a possession is not a necessity. Language is important chiefly as the vehicle by which tradition is inherited. Poland, for example, maintained its sense of independence in spite of political disasters by means of the vitality of its language; the history of French Canada has been similar. The introduction of mother tongues into general use broke down the de-nationalizing influence of Latin, the universal language of cultivated people in past centuries. It also smoothed out the provincial character of early states, in which each district had its own dialect and customs. The general adoption of the dialect used by Chaucer unified North and South, not to mention East and West Midland districts. There is a fine national ring in the Tudor school-master's words: 'I love Rome, but I love London better: I favour Italy, but I favour England more: I know the Latin tongue, but I worship the English.' The same thing happened in Italy, where separatist tendencies were more marked. By his use of the language of the common people Dante could unite Lombard and Sicilian. In the United States something of the same kind is going on to-day. Language is the only

universal link there, and in the schools millions of immigrant children are moulded into a common citizenship by its teaching.

Language does not merely unite a people; it maintains the traditions of a people by handing down patriotic literature. English Nationalism would be dumb were it not for those famous passages in Shakespeare, Milton and Wordsworth which appeal to emotions common to all men. How fruitless the possession of a living language may be where there is no cultural heritage is seen in Wales and Ireland. In the former the existence of a Welsh language does not prove the existence of a Welsh nation; and Irish Nationalism, though it flies a linguistic flag, has far deeper roots.

The possession of a common religion has been extremely important in creating nation states. But if we are to judge from the United States it is of small value to-day. In days when the Church was universal a man might take up a post anywhere in Europe, in much the same way as an imperial administrator might be sent to any part of an empire. When the head of an Oxford friary complained of the introduction of aliens, his superior at Barcelona promptly packed him off to a post in Germany. But in the English Reformation the struggle to create an independent church laid the foundation of the nation. Much the same thing happened in Bohemia and in Ireland; the corner-stone of Japanese nationalism is the Shinto religion, and the Jews have preserved their unity solely through loyalty to the Law. But as soon as toleration was discovered as the best way of dealing with refractory minorities religion ceased to be the basis of the nation state. The hard Reformation compromise—*Cujus regio, Ejus*

*religio*¹—broke down in favour of a mode of living which was none the less patriotic because it was tolerant of divergences of religious opinion. Germany, where the Reformation struggle was most bitter, remains to-day half Protestant and half Roman Catholic.

As Nationalism is such a vague conception it is usually symbolized by a flag or some such totem. Concrete memories of the fatherland are often more real than any vague ideal, and a thousand men will fight for a specific country where one will fight for an abstract ideal. Even the Jews, who have been so successful in preserving their national tradition by other means, feel the need of a national home, and no one who possesses a fatherland should deny it to the Zionist. Patriotism, to the British soldier, means Piccadilly, Leicester Square or a back garden in Balham. 'What comes to him in the final charge?' asks Graham Wallas; 'perhaps the row of pollard elms behind his birthplace. More likely some personification of his country.... Romans have died for a bronze eagle or a wreathed staff, Englishmen for a flag, Scotsmen for the sound of the pipes.'

There is much truth in Mazzini's view that God marks out the limits of nations by natural boundaries. But this is not inevitably the case. The lack of such boundaries in Eastern Europe is the cause of many modern problems. Where should the frontiers of Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia be drawn? Because of the absence of natural walls and ditches people have wandered here and there and got themselves thoroughly mixed up. Geography, while it often

¹i.e., That each prince should decide the religion of his state.

encourages national unity, equally often discourages it.

Generally speaking nations have made states; but it is sometimes possible for a state, by its centralized administration, not indeed to make a nation, but to help to bring it into being. Just as Law often creates Morality by forcing people to get into the habit of obeying certain rules, so a strong government may create a national unit out of a group of separate provinces. This is seen most clearly in the history of England, Scotland and Wales, or in the work of the Catholic kings in Spain. None the less it is clear from the examples of the Austrian Empire, or the existence of separatist tendencies in French Canada or Boer South Africa, that where a vital tradition has been already formed not even the wisest government can do more than moderate its influence. The history of the British Empire shows that where a minority's rights are respected it is possible to form a Commonwealth of Nations; but where they are not, as the history of the United States and Ireland proves, Nationalism will ultimately succeed in throwing off the yoke. The chief problem for an international government will be to harmonize national aspirations with other claims.

Race, Instinct, Language, Religion, Geography and Administration all go to make up the sentiment of Nationalism. But the most important factor is an amalgam of all these—Tradition. As Renan said, it is *les tombeaux de ses ancêtres, les temples de ses aïeux* which create a nation. A common ancestry, a common religion, a home, a government—these things are not enough without a common heritage. 'A nation,' says Renan, 'is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things,

which are really one, constitute this soul, this spiritual principle. One is the past, the other is the present. One is the possession in common of a rich inheritance of memories; the other is present consent, the desire to live together, the will to realize the unimpaired heritage.' The memory of perils past, of exiles and misfortunes endured, the literature of patriotism, the inheritance of peculiar religious and political beliefs for which martyrs have suffered and heroes have fought—these are the foundation stones of a nation. Tradition defines the sense of Nationalism by throwing into prominence the landmarks by which it has progressed, by reading history backwards. Those elements in history are remembered which are most applicable to modern conditions. Everyone knows that England defeated the France of Louis XIV; but it is not part of our national tradition to remember that Charles II was the pensioner of Le Grand Monarque, or that William III fought for Holland rather than for England. Opposition to a common foe creates national solidarity; the heroes of such struggles are the heroes of all time—St. Joan, Robert the Bruce, Washington, Garibaldi, Luther and William the Silent. Sometimes, too, a myth about the past will be invented to make up for the absence of an historical tradition. Consider the story of Romulus and Remus, or the Teutonic myths cultivated by the Nazi party, or the romantic legends about the ninth century which play such a part in the culture of the Irish Free State.

The sentiment of Nationalism is woven of many strands and consecrated by long tradition. The older the group the less assertive is its Nationalism. When a nation is still in an adolescent stage, or when it is

oppressed or insulted by others, it expresses itself in a violent and excited way. Even older nations, normally less dangerous to their neighbours because more assured, are just as bellicose once their security is threatened. The facts of recent history speak for themselves. The trouble about the idea of the national sovereign state is that it is, as H. G. Wells frequently points out, already out of date. The idea may have developed fast, but science has developed faster. At a time when the world is so obviously an economic unit it is difficult to believe, as the Fascist does, that the nation state is the final and permanent stage of human development. 'The essential idea of nineteenth century nationalism was the "legitimate claims" of every nation to complete sovereignty, the claim of every nation to manage its own affairs within its own territory regardless of any other nation. The flaw in this idea is that the affairs and interests of every modern community extend to the uttermost parts of the earth.'

Patriotism, said Dr. Johnson, is the last refuge of a scoundrel. It can also be a fine virtue and an essential one. There is all the difference in the world between a legitimate pride in the achievements of one's country and the homicidal ravings of fanatics obsessed by their own self-importance. There are examples of both sorts in every country. The ideal citizen is one who is neither smug nor hysterical, but who none the less is patriotic. Animals, when they dislike each other, growl and bite. The members of a community of human beings have got beyond this stage. But the polity of nation states has not. The task before mankind is to solve the problems of world citizenship along the lines upon which we

have already solved the problem of living together as members of a group.

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II

IMPERIALISM

IF a nation be regarded as a man, then colonies are his children who grow up to an independent life of their own. In some cases the family tie remains strong, in some so weak as to be politically non-existent; it all depends upon the way in which the father of the family has treated his offspring. But in every case—even with those South American states who have long severed connexion with Spain—the original traditions of blood, language and custom remain strong.

‘All our modern imperialisms are this,’ says H. G. Wells: ‘the more or less conscious efforts of once nation states to become world wide.’ But to define Imperialism as the extension of the nation unit is not enough. It is an equally necessary extension of the economic system upon which the nation state is built—capitalism. One of the forces of Imperialism is the appeal of public prestige; the other is the appeal of private profit. Modern Imperialism combines both these elements, the Romantic and the Economic. In the past the Romantic has dominated. Most of the great empires of the past were conquered for reasons of personal or dynastic ambition. Such empires were those of Alexander, Genghis Khan, Napoleon. Others, more idealistic in inspiration, were religious empires such as the Arabian conquest which succeeded the conversion of Mahomet.

And what of the greatest of past empires, the Roman? Like the British in India, the Romans were compelled

by force of circumstances to embark on an imperialist policy. At first the citizens of the Republic had no imperial pretensions; but the war with Carthage, and the growing necessity of controlling the Mediterranean trade routes as the population of the City increased, led them by degrees along the road to empire. The comparison between the Roman and the British Empire (particularly in India) is full of interest. They were similar in growth and methods of control, in tolerance of local custom and extension of citizenship; the parallel between Pax Romana and Pax Britannica is very close: a member of our empire can sympathize with St. Paul's claim, *Civis Romanus Sum!* But differences in race, climate and extent of territory make any strict analogy impossible.

One less obvious distinction calls for attention. Both empires exploited the territories under their control. As for the Romans, an Italian historian has written, 'We must abandon one of our most widespread misconceptions which teaches that Rome administered her provinces in a broad-minded spirit, consulting the general interest, and adopting wide and beneficent principles of government for the good of the subjects.' The British, as we shall see, have discovered that mere commercial exploitation is no justification for Imperialism, that the white man bears a burden of responsibility, even though he rewards himself handsomely for bearing it. He may not always have lived up to this responsibility, but this conception of Trusteeship is the gospel of salvation for empire. In the days of the old East India Company peculation and expropriation were common, but the modern Civil Service in India has never been guilty of that corruption and extortion which was universal in the Roman Empire.

The India Charter of 1833 states that 'the interests of native subjects are to be preferred to those of Europeans wherever the two come into conflict.' We have learned the sovereign lesson of imperial rule, a lesson the Romans never learned: that commercial exploitation and political administration must never be concentrated in the same hands.

This conception of Trusteeship was unknown to the earlier empires of modern times. The Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch empires were frankly commercial propositions. A certain amount of missionary zeal may have alleviated Spanish rule in its best days, and the founders of the Slave Trade certainly regarded themselves as crusaders; but there is no greater crime in the history of imperialism than the way in which the indigenous civilizations of Central and Southern America were exterminated by the Conquistadors in their lust for gold. Here was exploitation in its most brutal form. Such greed brought inevitable punishment: as a result of the continuous import of silver from the Indies—a get-rich-quick policy if ever there was one—the native industries of Spain failed to develop. Industrious commercial habits proved unnecessary and, after a century of prosperity, religious intolerance completed what economic laziness had begun—the decline of the Spanish Empire.

The history of the British Empire begins with the colonization of Virginia. 'And after thanks given to God for our safe arrival thither, we manned our boats, and went to view the land to take possession of the same in the right of the Queen's most excellent Majesty.' It has been said of our empire that we conquered it in a fit of absent-mindedness. No shadow of the imperial destiny falls across our history.

until the claims of the Dutch to naval supremacy had been defeated. The battle then lay with the French. The interest of the wars of the eighteenth century is to watch the prize of Empire hanging in the balance. On both sides are obscure men in whose imperialistic activities the home governments take little interest. Fortunately, the British were the first to become aware of the potentialities of the struggle overseas; the result was the annexation of Canada and India when the struggle was decided in 1763.

These early empires were administered in accordance with the Mercantilist views which dominated economic thought from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. In the Mercantilist Empire, or the Old Colonial System, colonies were regarded simply as satellites of the mother country. They were permitted no life of their own. By such measures as the Navigation Acts trade with foreign powers and the use of foreign shipping was prohibited. The Colonies were to provide raw materials—sugar, bullion, spices—and they were to receive in return the manufactures of the mother country. They existed entirely for her benefit; all she did was to protect the chartered companies whose interests lay in those parts. This Old Colonial System met its doom in the revolt of the American Colonies, and Mercantilism was supplanted by the doctrine of Free Trade which developed after their secession.

Something like Mercantilism has been revived in our day under the name of Imperial Preference. The German Empire before the War was run in accordance with this view. The doctrine achieved political importance in England as the result of the propaganda of Joseph Chamberlain in 1905, but it was not enforced

to any great extent until Mr. Neville Chamberlain negotiated the preference terms known as the Ottawa Agreements of 1932. Pushed to extremes (as was done by Lord Beaverbrook in his Imperial Crusade) the doctrine aims at creating an imperial *zollverein*, a group within which the members trade freely, while prohibitive duties are placed on the import of foreign goods. It is a policy of protection aiming at the creation of an independent economic unit. To use a metaphor of H. G. Wells, it is the policy of the Closed Fist as opposed to the Open Hand, and it is obviously dangerous to the maintenance of world peace. But the facts themselves prevent the policy being pushed to such extremes: Canada trades more with the U.S.A. than with Great Britain; Britain trades as much with the Argentine and with Denmark as with any of the Dominions. Hence although Imperial Preference may be called a new form of Mercantilism it has not a close affinity with the Old Colonial System.

Great Britain learnt the lesson of the American war. Never again has she attempted to curtail the independence of those states we now call the Dominions; she learned instead to bind them, as Burke advised, with bonds 'light as air and strong as iron.' The opening date of this new imperial experiment of a Liberal Empire, carried through in the epoch of Free Trade, is the publication of Lord Durham's report on Canada in 1839. The concluding landmark is the Statute of Westminster of 1931. The Imperial Conference which prepared that statute defined the position of the Dominions as 'Equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any respect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown and freely associated as

members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.' This democratic Empire is the greatest and most successful experiment in the history of Imperialism. But it is to be noted that it affects only Dominions inhabited by white men. In those countries the indigenous races were, with the exception of South Africa, of small size. The Red Indians, the Maoris and the Aborigines had tracts of land reserved for them and the problem of subject races never became one of serious importance.

In the middle of the last century few people had anything to say in favour of Imperialism, but towards the close a great change took place. Modern Imperialism, as far as most European nations are concerned, began in 1884. That is the date when the Scramble for Africa began, though the penetration of Asia had been going on for some years. European nations became empire-conscious and they grasped the spoils with both hands. Between 1884 and 1914 Germany acquired one million square miles of new territory with a population of fifteen millions; France, who had already occupied Algiers and Tunis, acquired four million square miles with fifty million inhabitants; Great Britain acquired over three million square miles with a population of fifty-seven million. These lands were situated in Africa and Asia; expansion in America was out of the question on account of the Monroe Doctrine, a hands-off-America decree promulgated in 1823. In Africa the powers encountered little opposition, because the territories were inhabited by backward races who found to their cost that they had no defence against the weapons of 'civilization.' Some idea how great this movement of European imperialism has been, can be seen from the fact that in 1492 the white peoples

controlled 9 per cent of the surface of the world; in 1935 they controlled 85 per cent.

In Asia, where older civilizations prevailed, the story was different. The attitude of the old Chinese Empire to an expansionist Britain is epitomized in a letter sent by the Emperor Chien Lung to George III in answer to a request for trading rights:

'You, O King, live beyond many seas; nevertheless impelled by your humble desire to partake of the benefits of our civilization, you have despatched a mission respectfully bearing a letter of request. I have perused your letter, the earnest terms in which it is couched reveal a respectful humility on your part which is highly praiseworthy . . . Our Dynasty's majestic virtue has penetrated into every country under Heaven, and Kings of all nations have offered their costly tributes. As your Ambassador can see for himself, we possess all things. I set no value on objects strange or ingenious; I have no use for your country's manufactures.'

Asia failed to open her doors when Europe knocked politely. The sequel was a piece of salesmanship upon which it is impossible to dwell with pride. British missionaries and manufactures were thrust down the throats of the reluctant Chinese at the point of the bayonet in the Opium War of 1840. Commodore Perry's American naval squadron forced Japan to open her doors in an equally business-like manner. In later years it was seen that Japan could answer this challenge in a more effective manner than could the moribund Chinese Empire.

How are we to explain the change of attitude towards Imperialism which is evident in the last part of the century? In 1850 Disraeli was at one with

Gladstone and the Manchester School: those 'wretched colonies,' he called them, 'dead weights,' which he hoped would drop off when ripe. Twenty years later he was of a different opinion: he made the Queen Empress of India, he controlled the Suez Canal and dominated Egypt. People were beginning to beat the imperialist big drum. Notable figures who taught Britain to be aware of her imperialist destiny and who preached expansion with the enthusiasm of missionaries were Seeley, the author of *The Expansion of England*, W. E. Henley, an influential journalist, and above all, Kipling. His *Recessional* is well known—though Chesterton's reply to it is not so famous. Here is a verse from another poem in which the poet of Empire intones the creed of the White Man's Burden:

'Fair is our lot—O goodly is our heritage!
 (Humble ye, my people, and be fearful in your
 mirth!)
 For the Lord our God Most High
 He hath made the deep as dry,
 He hath smote for us a pathway to the ends of all
 the Earth!'

Ruskin was of the same opinion. The following words are from a lecture which is said to have inspired the greatest of imperialists, Cecil Rhodes:

'This is what England must either do, or perish: she must found colonies as fast and as far as she is able, formed of her most energetic and worthiest men; seizing every piece of fruitful waste ground she can set her foot on, and then teaching these her colonists that their chief virtue is to be fidelity to their country, and that their first aim is to be to advance the power of England by land and sea.'

With this compare Shaw's description of British Imperialism included in *The Man of Destiny* (1896). The whole speech is too long to quote, but here are a few sentences:

'Every Englishman is born with a certain miraculous power that makes him the master of the world. When he wants a thing, he never tells himself that he wants it. He waits patiently until there comes into his mind, no one knows how, a burning conviction that it is his moral and religious duty to conquer those who possess the thing he wants. Then he becomes irresistible.... He is never at a loss for an effective moral attitude. As the great champion of freedom and national independence, he conquers and annexes half the world, and calls it Colonization. When he wants a new market for his adulterated Manchester goods he sends a missionary to teach the natives the Gospel of Peace. The natives kill the missionary: he flies to arms in defence of Christianity; fights for it; conquers for it; and takes the market as a reward from heaven....'

One of the chief causes of modern Imperialism is undoubtedly that extension of Nationalism to which reference has been made. The nation is regarded as possessing a civilizing mission. Its members belong to a superior race whose business it is to protect and control incompetent savages. Rhodes was the incarnation of this *esprit de peau*; he more than any other succeeded in putting his ideas into practice. 'I contend,' he wrote in 1877, 'that we are the first race in the world, and that the more of the world we inhabit, the better it is for the human race.' The trouble about this view of the Anglo-Saxon race as the divine instrument of salvation is that other races soon make the same

claim. The resultant situation provides dynamite for war. Nowadays it is easy to be sceptical about this notion of a mission, especially after we have seen Abyssinia conquered with poison gas in the name of civilization. But that there is something in it anyone will admit who has first-hand knowledge of the conditions prevailing in slave-holding states. The idea of an imperial mission found much support in England from Christian missionaries and humanitarians who realized that it was essential that primitive races should sometimes be protected from each other. These men were responsible for the first step in liberalizing Imperialism by emancipating the slaves. The British Evangelicals were in the van of that crusade and they succeeded in the end in convincing both Europe and America. Of this movement Lecky has said that it 'may probably be regarded as among the three or four perfectly virtuous pages in the history of nations.'

The abolition of slavery is no more than a negative act. The positive side of the question is the education of natives and the protection of their rights. That is the essence of Imperialism regarded as Trusteeship. It was on this point that Burke left his mark on imperialist thought. In his American speeches and in his attack on Warren Hastings, he showed that constant vigilance on the part of the home government was the only method which ensured justice and equity to subject races; that the possibility of self-enrichment and the abuse of arbitrary power corrupted colonial administrators and bred tyrannical ways of thought and action. He showed that the government of subject races was not to be regarded as a commercial proposition (as the old Chartered Companies had regarded it), but as a moral trust to peoples we had brought under our

control. Conversely, as a method of practical politics, 'the question is not whether you have a right to render your people miserable, but whether it is not your interest to make them happy.' Bind your colonies with links of freedom: only then will you ensure their loyalty. In these views lies the genesis of the ideal of a liberal empire and of the principle of trusteeship.

An equally important but less advertised cause of imperialist expansion is economic necessity. In the development of the industrial state a stage comes when the home market reaches saturation point. It is then essential to export surplus manufactures and 'finance capital,' i.e., surplus capital used for investment. During the Free Trade epoch England was the workshop of the world; but when other nations reached a similar stage of industrialism new markets had to be discovered in colonial lands. It was not only necessary to find new markets, but also to obtain control of the raw materials necessary for industrial production.

Communist theory regards this economic reason for Imperialism as the sole explanation of such a movement. This is Lenin's analysis: 'Imperialism is capitalism in that stage of development in which the domination of monopolies and finance capital has taken shape; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world by international trusts has begun, and in which the partition of all the territory of the earth by the greatest capitalist countries has been completed.' In consequence the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics claims to have enfranchised the subject races of the old Russian Empire. Consisting as it does of 180 nationalities, it is organized into eleven national republics and twenty-two autonomous republics. It claims to have

granted self-government to all its component races; but liberals find it difficult to reconcile this claim to self-government with the ubiquitous existence of secret or military agents of the central government. At any rate Soviet propaganda in the territories of European empires is at pains to emphasize the contrast between 'freedom' under Communism and 'slavery' under Imperialism.

In order to control new markets and exploit raw material it is possible either to gain political control by direct conquest—as in Burma, Manchuria, Abyssinia; or to influence a country indirectly by economic penetration, by advancing loans or gaining concessions. England has done this in Persia and the Argentine; French capital built the Tonkin, Siberian and Abyssinian railways; Germany largely controlled the old Turkish Empire by constructing the Berlin-Baghdad railway. The typical stages by which this type of imperial control may be advanced can be studied in the settlement of Rhodesia. First the concession hunters of rival nations; then the settlement of emigrants and the formation of a chartered company; the inevitable native revolts and their suppression; the expropriation of native lands—and control is complete. Economic Imperialism is not always a pretty picture to contemplate. What is the use of emancipating the slaves if they are to become wage-slaves? The complaint of the Matabele rings in our ears to remind us of what has happened and may happen again:

‘Our country is gone, our cattle are gone, our people are scattered, we have nothing to live for, our women are deserting us; we are the slaves of the white man, we are nobody and have no rights or laws of any kind.’

Two other motives for expansion may be noted. One is the necessity for an outlet for surplus population. The nineteenth century saw European populations increasing with unprecedented rapidity. This was due partly to an improved standard of living, partly to the advances of medical science. It soon became apparent that the small area of their native lands was insufficient to support these people. Emigration became a necessity. By such means the Dominions were populated, and the United States provided a huge reservoir for immigrants from Germany, Italy and South-Eastern Europe. In all such territories climatic conditions were ideal for the settlement of Europeans. This was not the case in the African colonies. It is significant that nearly two million Germans settled in the Middle West of America, and only eighteen thousand in German South-West Africa. In 1935 there were only eighty-four Italian farmers in the deserts of Eritrea; whether the highlands of Abyssinia will prove a more suitable outlet remains to be seen.

A final cause for annexation, not of rich territories but of key spots in the geography of the world, is the necessity for strategic bases. In the acquisition of such bases as Gibraltar, Malta and Aden long before the Suez route was opened, we stand amazed at the prescience of our ancestors.

Two attitudes predominate in modern Imperialism: the idealist excuse for Protection, the materialist necessity for Exploitation. Both principles are recognized in the preamble of the Berlin treaties of 1884. 'In the Name of Almighty God' the powers agree 'to regulate the conditions most favourable to the development of trade and civilization in certain regions of Africa'; they also recognize that they are 'concerned, at

the same time, as to the means of furthering the moral and material well-being of the native populations.' Even if the materialist cause be admitted to be the more fundamental it would be foolish to deny the benefits European rule has frequently conferred on subject races. Imperialism at its worst can be seen in the past history of the Belgian Congo.¹ To see it at its best the conditions prevailing in Algiers, Tunis, Egypt and India should be compared with those which prevailed a century ago. Trusteeship may occasionally serve as a cloak for hypocrisy, but in principle it is genuinely humanitarian. Its implications are recognized as such in the League Covenant. It is the principle upon which the Mandate system is built. Article 22 lays down that to those old German and Turkish territories 'which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilization.'

There are only two methods of controlling a subject area: military occupation, a policy which is becoming increasingly difficult as well as unpopular; and self-government, the admission to Dominion status. This alternative is what the Mandate principle implies. But in most cases a long period of political education is necessary, and whether nations will prove unselfish enough to put it into practice remains to be seen. Two British territories—Iraq, a Mandate, and Egypt, a Protectorate—have already acquired independence. Others—the Japanese mandates—have already become naval bases. The test case at present is India. A heavy responsibility lies on the British and on the Nationalist

¹ See E. D. Morel's *Red Rubber*.

party here: if the new constitution works successfully the greatest imperialist experiment in history will have succeeded. The country, with its multitudinous variations in race, religion and language, offers immense difficulties. Before the War only the most extreme radicals dared to promise self-government. Lord Cromer, a very liberal administrator, spoke in those days as only the extreme conservative speaks in ours:

'The idea is not only absurd; it is not only impracticable. I would go farther and say that to entertain it would be a crime against civilization, and especially against the voiceless millions in India whose interests are committed to our charge.'

The difference between the general consensus of opinion then and now indicates the advance the new imperial policy has made.

Before those words were spoken the reaction of the East against Western Imperialism had begun. In 1905 the Japanese defeated the Russians. Four years later, partly as a result of the pressure exercised by the National Congress movement, the Morley reforms began to reconstruct the Indian administration with a view to a greater measure of self-government. Since that date the reaction has grown, mainly because of the new Nationalism which has sprung up in the East. Long ago the educational reforms instituted in India were criticized as attempting 'to raise a race of administrators on the literature of revolt.' We have reaped the whirlwind by this inculcation of Western liberal ideas. An efficient administration has created the consciousness of national unity, a consciousness which flourishes in opposition. Much the same thing has happened in Japan and China. Not merely has an independent

national spirit arisen but, by the export of scientific ideas and inventions, an Industrial Revolution has been created in the East. The Hoogli cotton mills provide the cloths which Lancashire used to export; in Japan the manufacture of cheap articles has grown to such a pitch that British merchants are fighting to preserve what remains of their markets in the East.

Economic Imperialism is now an international problem. In every quarter of the globe the frantic struggle for markets is being waged by every industrial nation in existence. There are no more unexploited territories to develop. Does this mean that those countries which have no colonies will wrest territory from those which have? The world is commonly divided nowadays into the Satisfied and the Non-Satisfied powers: Great Britain, France and the U.S.A. on the one hand; Japan, Italy and Germany on the other. The latter demand markets and colonies; if they cannot get them by peaceable means they will get them by force. The demand, of course, is largely a question of prestige: in a Nationalist world 'empires' *sound* better than mere 'states.'

There is a lot of cant and muddled thinking on the economic side of this question. Access to Raw Materials is one plea. But no industrial nation however extensive its empire can be entirely self-sufficing. Of the twenty-five materials said to be essential to modern industry, the British Empire possesses eighteen, Germany and Italy four each. Some of these necessities—wheat or coal—could not possibly be acquired by a reshuffling of colonies, simply because they do not exist in colonial areas. None the less it is true that a country which possesses colonies has very definite advantages. It gains a preferential tariff, and in some cases (iron ore

from Malaya and Nigeria, rubber from the Dutch Indies), it may erect a prohibitory tariff against export to foreign powers. It can pay for raw materials in its own currency. It has better opportunities for preferential treatment in the investment of surplus capital.

A less convincing plea is that colonies provide closed markets for the export of manufactured goods. Unless a return is made to the strict mercantilist system (in which case the colonies would revolt) this is no longer the case. Preference for the goods of the mother country there may be; monopoly there is none. Undercutting on the part of foreign manufacturers is always possible. In 1934 Britain had 24 per cent of the British colonial market; Japan had 7.5 per cent. Of the total of British exports only 10 per cent went to the colonies. Still less convincing is the plea frequently heard in countries which have artificially increased the population by offers of bonuses on the number of children—a regular stock-breeding concern—that they must have an outlet for surplus population. Japan has had an empire for forty years; the total emigrants to it only equal the increase in one year of the Japanese population. As far as Europe is concerned the chief difficulty is that so small an area of the globe remains which is suitable for the settlement of the white races.

The future of Imperialism remains obscure. In the past it has been the name of a movement actuated by many conflicting motives. It has never been a clearly defined programme mapped out from the start. In the history of empires, and particularly of the British Empire, Cromwell's words remain true: 'he goes farthest who knows not whither he is going.' Among the elements which make up the idea it is important that the liberal-humanitarian conception of Imperialism should

prevail: war and rebellion lie the other way. Both justice and expediency demand that in the dependent colonies of all nations governments should fully recognize the rights of those natives whose lands they have invaded. Some degree of exploitation there must be; but expropriation of native lands should be kept within severe limits. If the inhabitants of such lands cannot yet be granted the right to govern themselves, at least they are entitled to economic and legal freedom at the hands of a generous and just administration.

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III

INTERNATIONALISM

‘WHO is there that does not think his own cause just?’ Erasmus’s simple question goes to the heart of the matter of international relationships. Individuals find it difficult to appreciate the point of view of other people. How much more so do nations! As long as Nationalism means nothing more than sanctified egoism the problem of peace remains insoluble. It is unnecessary to repeat the arguments against war; a thousand writers have shown how inefficient a method is trial-by-combat for settling disputes. As Erasmus said, putting the problem on the lowest level, ‘if you cannot have the mind of a statesman, you might at least show the sense of a shopkeeper. Why not arbitrate?’ Simply because human beings, and far more so those superior touchy beings called Nations, dislike having their independence curtailed.

The ancients were unaware of the tendency of States to raise human vices like pride and selfishness to super-human proportions. They knew not Nationalism and so they made little contribution to Internationalism. The Greeks never seemed to be aware of the necessity of evolving principles upon which their City States should exist together. The result was that they destroyed each other in internecine conflict. For many centuries after that it was possible to shelve the problem. The *Pax Romana* and the *Pax Christiana* were threatened by rebellions and schisms, not by the hostilities of independent States.

Their ideal was cosmopolitan, not international (the word, by the way, is Bentham's). In the absence of the separatist tendencies of national states such an ideal was possible. In modern times it is clearly impracticable. Yet there are those who toy with the idea of a World State, and certainly Communism is cosmopolitan in aim. The founders of the League, however, recognized the fallacy of the Super State under modern conditions. The British Committee (Phillimore, Cecil, Smuts) which helped Wilson to formulate the ideal of the League reported: 'the earlier projects which aimed at setting up a kind of European Government with a supernational authority we have after consideration rejected, feeling that international opinion is not ripe for so drastic a pooling of sovereignty, and that the only feasible method of securing the object is by way of co-operation.' Hence the League is nothing more than the machinery for the pacific settlement of disputes, 'an ever visible working organ of the polity of civilization,' as Smuts called it; indeed the French term for it, *La Société des Nations*, is preferable because more accurate.

The seamless garment of the *Respublica Christiana* was rent by the quarrels of Popes and Emperors. At the same time the Nation States began to emerge and with their appearance all hope of unity according to the old plan disappeared. The Renaissance Despots naturally aimed at protecting and strengthening the states over which they ruled. But political theorists were soon at hand to tell them that what they did was not merely natural, but right. Henry VIII was Luther's Godly Prince in action: he determined not only the law of the land but also what men should believe. The theory of the Divine Right of Kings gave the required sanction to such actions, though the Stuarts found to their cost

that it did not convince everyone. After the Sovereign Princes appeared the Sovereign Peoples; the principle remained the same. In International matters States were regarded as independent of all restraints; they were absolute, supreme, and in no way must their sovereignty be impaired.

Niccolo Machiavelli is the best exponent of this theory of National Sovereignty because his doctrines are alive to-day. However high-minded his motives, they do not concern us here. What matters is that in *The Prince* (1513) he gives the clearest description how an absolutist state acts in practice in international affairs. As Bacon said, he is the supreme realist: 'We are much beholden to Machiavel and others that wrote what men do and not what they ought to do.' The Prince, he says, must act in whatever manner best furthers his interests.

'Wherefore it is necessary for a prince to harden himself and learn to be good or otherwise according to the exigence of his affairs.... How honourable it is for a prince to keep his word everybody understands. Nevertheless experience has shown in our times that those who have not tied themselves to it have done great things, and by their cunning and subtlety have overcome those who have been superstitiously exact.... A prince who is wise and prudent cannot or ought not to keep his word when the keeping of it is to his prejudice, and the causes for which he promised are removed. Were men good this doctrine should not be taught; but because they are wicked and not likely to keep faith with you, you are not obliged to any such strictness with them.'

The enunciation of the principles of what is politely called *raison d'état* shocked Europe. 'Old Nick' was a

suitable name for their author. They were 'pestilent Machivilian policies,' said an Elizabethan, because they approved what men were only too apt to do in their worst moments.

What Machiavelli taught, in fact, was freedom from those moral restraints and scruples which the Church had handed down from time out of mind. Once this had been done the doctrine of Absolutism or National Sovereignty developed apace. How far it is justified in the internal organization of states we will consider later. In the international sphere it teaches, as Hobbes¹ said, that the normal relationship between States is a state of war, that is, a state of nature in which prevails 'continual fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.' Some writers unwillingly admitted this to be the case; others said that it was eminently right and proper. The two writers who pushed the theory to extremes were Hegel and Treitschke, Bismarck's philosopher. In the view of the former the State is the realization of the highest moral and rational ideal; what it says is therefore right. Hence international law and morality cannot and ought not to exist because it would limit the supremacy of the State. Free sovereign States, said Treitschke, cannot have obligations towards one another because treaties are only voluntary agreements which may be terminated at the will of either party. 'The essence of the State is, firstly power; secondly power; thirdly power.'

A typical argument for war is added. 'The hope of banishing war is not only meaningless but immoral; for its disappearance would turn the earth into a great temple of selfishness.' Apparently States may be selfish,

¹ The author of *Leviathan*. 1651

but men may not. A more common argument is the biological one. You cannot change human nature, say some; hence the struggle for existence remains the true law of nature. This is what Hobbes said; but Darwin's theory of 'the survival of the fittest' (the phrase is Spencer's) is dragged in to support the statement. Darwin gives no authority for this view. The struggle, he pointed out, operated in *two* ways, by Competition or by Co-operation. Mutual aid is just as much Nature's way as is competition. Examples from the animal and insect world are superfluous. Indeed, biologically speaking, Internationalism is not a vain dream but a practical necessity for the continued development of human life, because war does not in fact result in the survival of the fittest, but of the feeblest stock.

It would be a mistake to regard these views on Sovereignty as merely the explosions of liverish theorists. *Raison d'état* has been practised far more than it has been preached. In his salad days Frederick the Great wrote a treatise to show how shocking Machiavelli's doctrines were; but when he came to the throne he put them into practice most successfully. Machiavelli waxed enthusiastic about the way his hero, Cesare Borgia, invited his rebel generals to dinner and then chopped off their heads. It was a *bel impresa*, a fine, sudden, ruthless stroke of policy—only equalled by the events of June 30, 1934 in Germany. Many realistic statesmen have done these things, but few remark as Cavour did: 'What rascals we should be if we did for ourselves what we do for our country!'

What this doctrine amounts to is a divorce between public and private morality. Religion forbids us to act in certain ways and the Law sees to it that we don't. But in international politics, according to the 'realist,'

there is no such standard of ethics because there is no law to enforce it. It is perfectly true that the analogy between private and public life is not exact, because the State has a wider responsibility than the individual. It cannot prefer death before dishonour. Men may allow themselves to be imprisoned or put to death for their beliefs; but it is far more doubtful whether the State has the right to commit suicide in this manner. Admitting this, it is difficult to see why a state should not keep faith. Wars fought in self-defence may be justifiable; scrapping treaties or refusing to arbitrate is not.

If the existence of international morality is denied, international law is out of the question. Law represents the minimum of morality; it tells you not to steal, but it does not force you to be unselfish. At present international law is in an uneasy stage between morality and law proper. It is not a body of rules laid down by a supreme legislature and enforced by sanctions, because neither exist. Does this mean that morality does not exist either? That is what the philosophers of despair say. Men can't be trusted, says the Dictator, therefore they must be ruled; the Democrat, with a more optimistic view of human nature, says, Give them a chance to rule themselves and the result will not be as bad as you expect. He argues that the opposite view overlooks the chance of men becoming more moral as they are given more responsibility. He asks you to compare the internal condition of a country five hundred years ago with what it is to-day. Law has become supreme within the State; it has suppressed duelling, private warfare, piracy and the like. On that analogy it may be possible for a law to exist between nations as it already does between men. Individuals have had to surrender a part of their independence in order to

live together as members of a society. Cannot nation states do the same?

Jean Bodin, one of the earliest writers on sovereignty (1576), argues that though the Prince is supreme in most respects he is still bound by the laws of nature and of God. In the same way we sometimes say, 'Yes, that may be the law of the land, but is it *right*?' What is implied is that there is a fundamental law of sorts which overrides statutory law. Where does this notion come from?

The Greeks realized that occasionally the law of God conflicted with the law of man; whenever it did so, Divine Law was held to be supreme. In this way the idea of a Law of Nature was developed, something which was universally admitted to be reasonable, and therefore divine; a law which, St. Paul said, is 'written on the hearts of men.' The stoics took up this philosophic notion and, as many of them were lawyers, applied it to Roman Law, so that Roman Law soon came to recognize three types of law: *Ius Civile*—State law, the law of the land; *Ius Gentium*—the law common to the various peoples (not States) with which imperial administrators had to deal; and *Ius Naturale*—'the dictates of right reason.' *Ius Gentium* began as a means of facilitating trade. It was seen that certain customs were common to all people, for instance that a debtor should pay his debts, that men must keep faith in contracts, that foreshores were common property (a principle not yet recognized in English Law). In the final stage of Roman Law in the *Institutes* of Justinian for example, the *Ius Gentium* and the *Ius Naturale* were identified, the one being regarded as the practical expression of the principles laid down by the other.

In medieval times this identification was extended

by relating the Law of Nature to the Divine Will. St. Thomas Aquinas, for example, teaches that the Law of Nature is that part of the Law of God which human reason is able to ascertain. The result was that throughout the Middle Ages the Rule of Law, something which bound even Emperors, was fundamental. When St. Louis found that he had no right to certain districts which had fallen to him as the spoils of war, he gave them back to the English. Unfortunately at the end of the period some short-sighted Papal lawyers began to argue that, inasmuch as the Pope was God's supreme representative on earth, his will must be accepted as divine. It was through this breach in the fortress of the Rule of Law that the writers on sovereignty entered; they allowed every prince to be judge in his own cause.

Two theories of the State, therefore, stand in opposition to each other: the view that the State is sovereign and above all laws, human or divine, because it is its own law; and the view which maintains the existence of a Law of Nature or of Reason, overriding whatever the State may have laid down. The use of the phrase 'natural law' is rare in English Law, chiefly because the term is defective in a strictly legal sense. True law must be determinable, and it is hard to see men agreeing on what is the Divine Will in a particular instance. But it does occasionally appear in the old stoic sense, as in the following Order in Council for Rhodesia. Courts there are ordered to be 'guided in civil cases between natives by native law, so far as that law is not repugnant to natural justice or morality, or to any order made by Her Majesty in Council.' Even if it is thus seldom stated outright, the conception is always there standing for the *purpose* of the law. It is always implicit in the schoolboy's question: 'Is it fair?'

'The grandest function of the law of Nature,' wrote Sir Henry Maine, 'was discharged in giving birth to modern international law.'¹ The principal writer who brought this about was Hugo Grotius in his *De Jure Belli et Pacis* (1625). He was writing in the midst of the Thirty Years' War and he confesses that he was appalled at the 'licence of which savages would be ashamed. Men rushed to arms on the most frivolous excuses, and once war was declared there was no respect for the laws of God or man, nothing but a riot of fury as though authorization had been given for every sort of crime.' He therefore attempted to discover a common law between nations which would restrain this sort of thing. The great popularity his book achieved showed that there were plenty of others who agreed with him. But he was a legal theorist rather than a statesman and his views had little practical effect. With one of his suggestions, however, everyone is familiar to-day. As a Dutchman he resented the claims of the Portuguese to treat the Atlantic as a Portuguese lake; even worse were the claims of the English over the Channel, the main artery of Dutch trade. So he put forward the idea that the seas were free, and that countries could claim control only over the fringe of waters surrounding their coasts. The principle of the Freedom of the Seas, with the existence of territorial waters (the limit is usually three miles), is part of modern International Law.

As a basis upon which such law might be built Grotius pointed to the existing laws and customs of the sea upon which many nations were already agreed. He also suggested that the principles of Roman Law might be usefully applied. About this time every country in Europe except England was allowing Roman

¹ *Ancient Law*. 1861.

Law to supersede much of the native Customary Law. International Law is much indebted to this 'Reception' as it is called, because the Roman Law of Property came to be applied to the territorial possessions of states. Hence we often speak of Britain 'owning' Kenya, or France 'owning' Corsica—the principle of territorial sovereignty.

But a difficulty immediately arises. States vary in size. But in International Law, said the Swiss jurist Vattel in 1758, all states must be regarded as equal, irrespective of size of territory. 'A dwarf is as much a man as a giant is; a small republic no less a sovereign state than the most powerful kingdom.' That is admitted in law to-day; but the practical difficulties are very great. Has a country the size of Iraq the same say in international affairs as a country the size of Russia? Before the law, yes; but in political matters the Great Powers play a predominant part. Just as the largest shareholder has most interest in the affairs of a company, so a Great Power has more responsibility in international settlements than a small one.

These metaphors, which treat a country as a person with a life and property of its own, make for misleading personifications. When for convenience, we make use of the expression 'Germany says . . .' we mean no more than 'the German government expresses such and such an opinion.' Unfortunately the metaphor is not carried to its logical conclusion. We are so busy stressing the equality and independence of states that we forget that they, like individuals, have to live together on this planet, and that therefore they, like individuals, must develop sociable habits. In countries where Absolutism or Dictatorship is the rule men are quick to

talk about the 'anarchy' of freedom; they are not so anxious to appreciate the dangers of anarchy in international life.

Before the present century the necessity of international co-operation was but seldom seen. The world was larger, wars were local affairs and economic crises did not affect every country as they do to-day. Occasionally a particularly long and devastating war raised the question of international organization. In the reign of Henry IV the French Foreign Minister, Sully, sketched out his *Grand Design*, an idea which has much in common with M. Briand's plan of a United States of Europe. Similarly William Penn the Quaker suggested in 1690 'the Establishment of an European Diet' to 'establish rules of justice for sovereign princes to observe to one another.'

More influential was Rousseau's resurrection of the scheme of Bernardin St. Pierre, an optimistic *abbé* of the early eighteenth century. Rousseau points out clearly the weakness of international law, then and now:

'As to what is commonly styled international law it is certain that in the absence of all sanctions its dictates are mere phantoms with even less power than the law of nature. The natural law speaks at any rate to the individual heart. But international law, having no guarantee beyond the interest of those who accept it, finds that its decisions are only respected so long as self-interest confirms them.'

Rousseau also points out the weakness of the theory of the Balance of Power, the theory that by pacts and alliances you can overawe your enemy, a theory largely responsible for the Great War. The fallacy is that the Balance defeats its own end by overbalancing, since

each group wishes to go one further than its rival by gaining a preponderance in the number of allies. The result is, says Rousseau, that 'a union with some men has thus made us the enemies of all mankind.' The solution can 'only be through some kind of federal government that could unite the nations much as individuals are united now, the one set like the other submitting to the impartial authority of Law.'

An equally modern treatment, though also written in the eighteenth century, is Kant's *Project of Perpetual Peace*. This really amounts to the draft of the Covenant of the League of Nations. All nations, he suggests should sign a peace treaty which includes articles for banning secret treaties, prohibiting the purchase or exchange of territories without ascertaining the wishes of the inhabitants, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, and some measure of disarmament. Nations must 'enter into a League of Nations (*Völkerbund*), an organization where every state, even the smallest, can expect security and peace, not from its own power or its own decision, but from this great Society of Nations, where the powers of all are united in one and the decision is given by the general will acting according to law.'

As a result of the advances made by trade and invention in the nineteenth century the world has shrunk to an astonishing degree. Governments have nowadays not merely a duty but an interest in the maintenance of world peace. In non-political matters international agreements have long been the rule: the Postal and Telegraph Unions; the suppression of Slavery and Piracy; agreements concerning Radio, Canals, Copyright, and even Wagon Lits. But over other matters of equal international interest—emigra-

tion, raw materials, armaments—states still claim domestic jurisdiction. No nation to-day is entirely self-supporting or independent; there is definite evidence that they all belong to a Society of Nations, that they do not live in a state of nature, as writers on sovereignty would have us believe.

Reason dictates the necessity of some sort of international system; experience has shown that it can be successful. But on the rock of Nationalism all attempts to reach permanent political agreements have been wrecked. The first of such attempts was the Congress System after the Napoleonic wars. Its principles were high-sounding, but it failed in practice because it became an organization for putting the clock back to the previous century. It remains an object lesson in the danger of attempting to preserve the *status quo* in a changing world and of interfering in the internal affairs of other countries. For good reasons Canning finally torpedoed the whole scheme, exclaiming as he did so, 'Each nation for itself, and God for us all!'

Throughout the century there were sporadic attempts at conciliation over particular matters. Political questions were frequently settled at conferences without having resort to war. In this way Belgium was separated from Holland, Norway from Sweden; thorny problems such as the partition of Africa, rival claims in Morocco or the Balkan question were successfully solved. The conference which settled the latter problem, the Congress of Berlin in 1878, is indeed a superb proof that the idea¹ of Collective Security is feasible. On that occasion the chief powers agreed that Russia should not overrun the Balkans, and the Tsar was forced to retract his claims.

This method of conciliation, sitting around green

baize tables instead of digging trenches, has therefore been frequently successful. So has the method of Arbitration. The Alabama case of 1871 revived its popularity when it was seen that a great power like Britain was willing to meet the heavy claims of the U.S.A. without resorting to war. But in the present state of international law cases involving national prestige are, in practice, non-justiciable. When the Tsar attempted, at the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907, to get the nations to settle their differences by arbitration and not by trial-by-combat he met with no response. The Kaiser called the scheme 'humanitarian nonsense'; the British Government said 'we will assent to nothing which may limit the development or efficiency of the Eng'ish fleet, and compel England to submit important decisions to the decision of third parties'; and France refused to allow any scheme to 'limit the complete independence of the great states.'

Two good things did come out of those unlucky conferences—a convention to humanize war (the Red Cross had been founded in 1868), and the Hague Court of International Justice. Another such court was set up by Article 14 of the Covenant—the Permanent Court of International Justice. So far, however, few of the great powers have signed without reservations the Optional Clause, by which they agree to submit to its decisions in *every* case.

Nationalism and the lack of proper diplomatic machinery were the chief causes of the Great War. It was a conflict which raised above all the question which has been considered in this chapter: are states Sovereign or are they Dependent on one another in their mutual relationships? President Wilson clarified the issue with prophetic insight in January, 1917:

'The question upon which the whole future peace and policy of the world depends is this: Is the present war a struggle for a just and secure peace or only for a new balance of power? Only a tranquil Europe can be a stable Europe. There must be, not a balance of power, but a community of power; not organized rivalries but an organized common peace. First of all it must be a peace without victory. Victory would mean peace forced upon the loser, a victor's terms imposed upon the vanquished. It would be accepted in humiliation, under duress, as intolerable sacrifice and would leave a sting, a resentment, a bitter memory upon which terms of peace would rest, not permanently, but only as upon quicksands.'

The Treaty of Versailles was the attempted solution. Wilson, Smuts and others disapproved of much that was in the Treaty because they saw it would entail just such consequences. But in the forefront of the Treaty stands the Covenant of the League. To this Wilson pinned his faith. Even if the Treaty was bad, was there not Article 19 which allowed for revision? In the Preamble of the Covenant the essential aims of the League are admirably set forth:

'The High Contracting Parties—

In order to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security by the acceptance of obligations not to resort to war,
by the prescription of open, just and honourable relations between nations,
by the firm establishment of the understandings of international law as the actual rule of conduct among Governments, and
by the maintenance of justice and a scrupulous

respect for all treaty obligations in the dealings of all organized peoples with one another,

Agree to this Covenant of the League of Nations.'

It is not our business here to describe the League, or to recount its history. All that it is necessary to observe is that it does provide the machinery of an international organization, and that the ideals which animate it are the opposite to those expounded by Machiavelli and his followers. Everything is there if it can be made to work. Unfortunately it was incorporated in the Peace Treaty and it has suffered for the sins of that Treaty. As long as there remain powers which cold-shoulder it, as long as it appears to be merely an organization for the continuation of the *status quo*, so long will it continue to be ineffective. On the humanitarian side admirable work has been done; but in politics the forces of Nationalism and Imperialism have on two occasions—Manchuria and Abyssinia—proved too strong for it. But it should never be said that the League has failed. To say so is to make use of the vicious habit of personification. The League is what the governments of the world make it. At the present moment it is the Will to make the machinery work, not the machinery itself, which is at fault.

Professor Toynbee interprets history in terms of Challenge and Response.¹ The Challenge to-day is the danger of war; the Response is the League. If the Response in its present or future form fails, the alternative for our civilization is clear. Law has been defined as 'a body of rules for human conduct which by common consent shall be enforced by external power.' It is the *common consent*, in other words international

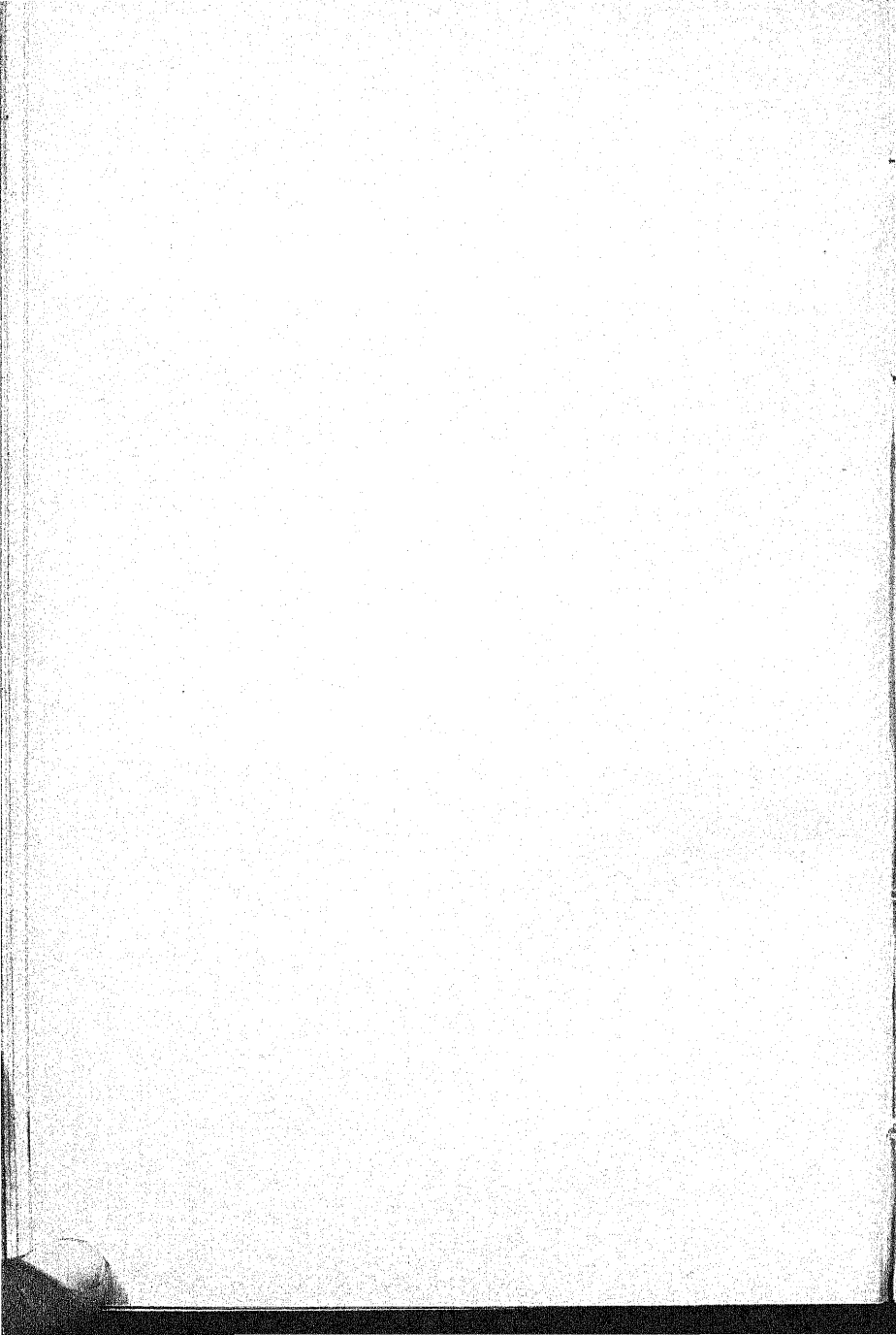
¹ See below, page 220.

morality, which is lacking at present. The lack of this consent makes the application of Sanctions or Collective Security difficult and dangerous. We have seen why this is so. The legal and political difficulties which at present loom so large can be easily solved if international morality exists. That such a morality is slowly developing can be seen from the successes of the League; that it is still far from universal can be seen from its failures.

In his Independence Day message for 1918 President Wilson once and for all expressed the ideal of internationalism: 'What we seek is the reign of law, based upon the consent of the governed and sustained by the organized opinion of mankind.'

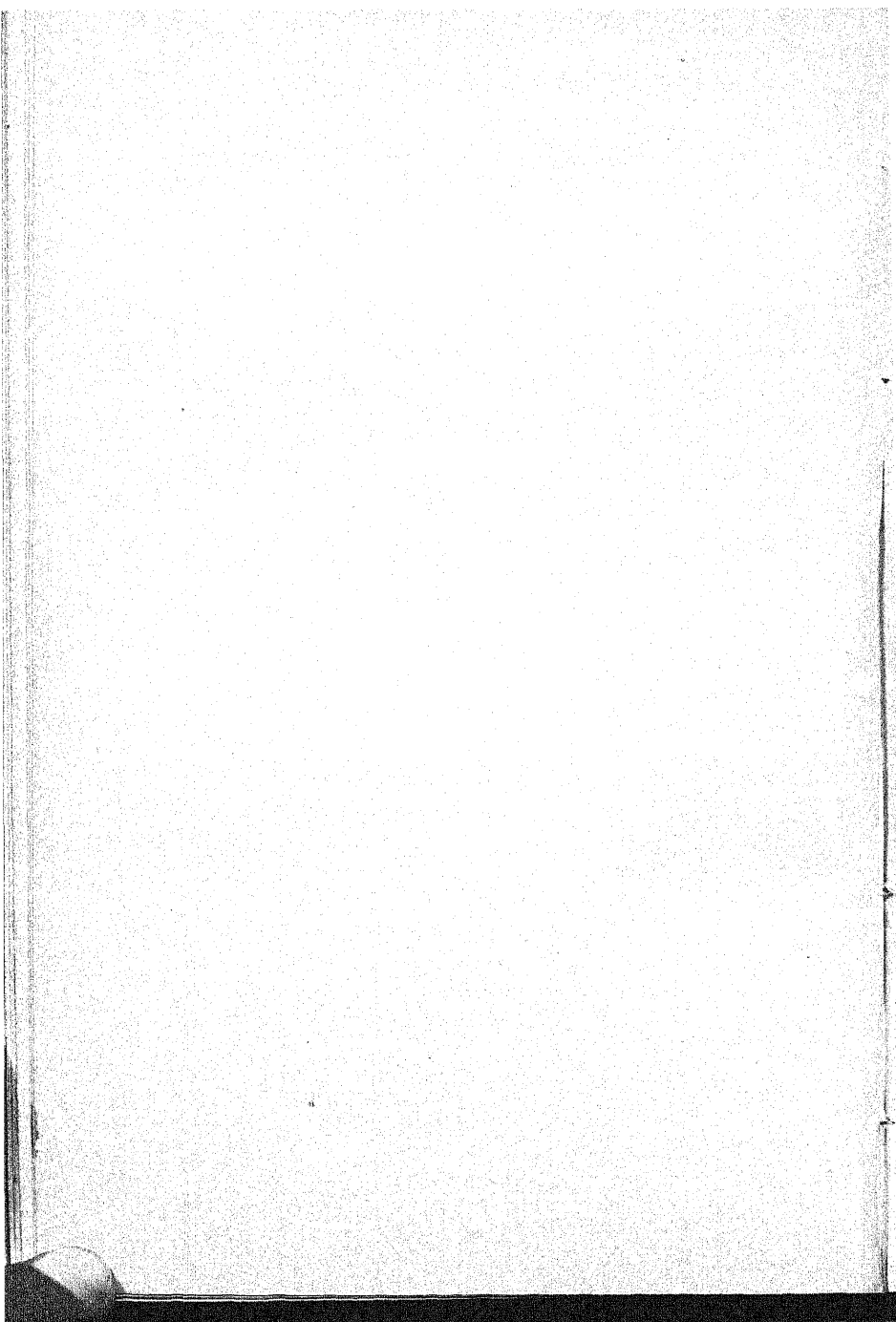
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PART II

THE MEANING OF DEMOCRACY



I

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

THE Great War, said President Wilson, was fought to make the world safe for Democracy. Ten years later Signor Mussolini tried to write its epitaph: 'The body of liberty is dead and her corpse already putrescent.'

According to pessimists the nineteen-thirties will be seen by future historians as the twilight of Liberty. The true democrat remains unconvinced by the tide of reaction he sees setting in against his ideals in so many parts of the world. He is no longer the bouncing optimist he was at the end of the last century. He is willing to concede that Democracy may not be the natural or inevitable form of government for every people; but he is still convinced that it is the only rational form of government. He will certainly admit that great dangers threaten the existence of Democracy to-day. Chief amongst these is the danger of ignorance. Many of the citizens of democratic states are slow to recognize the true worth of their heritage of freedom. The vast majority leave school without any realization of what Democracy means, because they have not been adequately educated in citizenship. Blissfully ignorant of their responsibilities, they do not realize the significance of the threats to their heritage. What their forefathers fought for, they take for granted. Long ago Mill pointed out the danger of this natural laziness, this 'fatal tendency of mankind to leave off

thinking about a thing when it is no longer doubtful.'

These chapters should therefore be read as an attempt to explain, however briefly, why Liberty is valuable and what it implies. We shall not attempt to describe the institutions of Democracy; how fallacious they are as a test of its existence was proved by the fate of the almost perfect paper constitution of the Weimar Republic.¹ Democracy is something which may not be defined but can be recognized. For our present purpose we will say that Democracy is a system of liberties secured by a parliamentary constitution and guaranteed by various Bills of Rights, not Declarations, because the latter are merely dogmas which have not the force of law. From this point of view Democracy means, not so much the direct rule of the people, but the rule of Law made by the representatives of the people; as such it may be contrasted with rule of force, or of wealth, or even of mass emotion.

We will begin our study of the democratic background with two standard definitions of Liberty, because Democracy is the political system based on that ideal. The first is by Tom Paine:² 'Liberty consists in the right to do whatever is not contrary to the rights of others'; that is, a respect for the others which permits Fair Play. The second is by Professor Laski: 'Liberty means being faithful to oneself, and it is maintained by the courage to resist.' The first stresses the negative aspect of Liberalism (to give the democratic creed its general name), the conditions under which self-development may take place; the second is more positive in that it implies a duty on the part of the

¹ In Germany, 1918-33.

² Author of *The Rights of Man*. 1790.

individual to develop his own personality. In both the stress is laid on the individual, not on the society of which he is a member. Liberal democracy assumes that the aim of the State is the creation of conditions under which all its members may live good lives. As Aristotle said, the State comes into existence to make life possible, but it continues in existence to make life good. The Liberal creed is therefore essentially individualistic and rationalistic; it is based on the idea that man is a rational animal who is at his best when he is most free.

From this point of view Mill develops the principle 'that the sole end for which mankind are warranted in interfering with the liberty of any of their number is self-protection. . . . The liberty of the individual must be thus far limited: he must not make himself a nuisance to other people.' The problem of Democracy is how to balance discipline with freedom, the good of the whole with the good of the parts. Running through Mill's argument is the distinction between self-regarding and other-regarding actions, which have to be limited in order to preserve the liberty of each one. To-day we are able to see more clearly that this is largely a theoretical distinction. There is little we can say or do in a highly organized society that does not have some effect on other people. By stressing the negative aspects of social theory, by talking about the problem as one of man's rights against the State, liberals often distort the nature of the organism called the State, or more accurately, Society. Political theory has from the start been divided on this question and all theorists may be divided into two classes: those who make Liberty their aim, and those who emphasize the claims of Authority. Mill's distinction has at least this to be said for it, that

in its absence the way is made free for Society to tyrannize over every aspect of the life of the individual.

What are these self-regarding actions, the system of liberties with which we identify Democracy? Mill defines 'the region of human liberty' as follows:

'It comprises, first, the inward domain of consciousness: demanding liberty of conscience, in the most comprehensive sense; liberty of thought and feeling; absolute freedom of opinion and sentiment on all subjects practical or speculative, scientific, moral or theological. The liberty of expressing and publishing opinions may seem to fall under a different principle, since it belongs to that part of the conduct of an individual which concerns other people; but, being almost of as much importance as the liberty of thought itself, and resting in great part on the same reasons, it is practically inseparable from it. Secondly, the principle requires liberty of tastes and pursuits; of framing the plan of our life to suit our own character; of doing what we like, subject to such consequences as may follow—without impediment from our fellow creatures so long as what we do does not harm them, even though they should think our conduct foolish, perverse or wrong. Thirdly, from this liberty of each individual follows the liberty, within the same limits, of combination among individuals—freedom to unite, for any purpose not involving harm to others.... No society in which these liberties are not, on the whole, respected is free, whatever may be its form of government.'

It is our business to see how the demand for these liberties evolved and what they amount to. It must be realized from the start that they are all interconnected, that you cannot, for example, have political liberty

without the freedom of the Press. Hence the reader must be prepared for occasional repetition. At the same time it is hoped that he does not expect a complete history of individualism. Lord Acton was the only man who tried to write the history of Liberty, and he made no more than a start because he died before he finished reading everything relevant to the subject. Like Topsy, Democracy 'just grow'd.' We can do no more than mention some of the stages by which we have arrived at our present situation.

* * * * *

Freedom of thought is fundamental to Democracy. Thought precedes action, and without some degree of liberty in this respect progress of any sort would be impossible. Milton was right to prize it above all: 'Give me the right to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all other liberties.' But thought is free by its own nature; what is essential is freedom to communicate one's own thoughts to others. Hence freedom of thought implies freedom of speech, and that implies freedom to print and to speak in public. It was because of this fundamental character of the freedom of conscience that the demand for toleration was one of the chief motives in the creation of Democracy. Political liberty is no more than the instrument whereby civil and religious liberty is secured.

Our chief debt to the Greeks is their invention of critical thinking. They were the most inquisitive of peoples and they were the first to exercise their minds freely. Free speech flourished in Athens as it has seldom flourished elsewhere. Hence it is curious that we should find in such an atmosphere the first martyr to the cause

of freedom of thought. The case of Socrates abounds in paradoxes. He was condemned nominally as a blasphemer; but it is probable that the real cause of his death was that he disagreed with the democratic faction in power. He died because he defended the integrity of his beliefs against the tyranny of the majority. What he called a 'supernatural voice' told him that his duty was 'living for philosophy and cross-questioning both myself and others.' He felt bound to obey this charge, and he justified his activities as of benefit to the State. 'Daily discussions of the matters about which you hear me conversing is the highest good for man,' he told his judges; 'life that is not treated by such discussion is not worth living.'

Every liberal will agree with him in this; but every liberal is not as wise as Socrates. When he was given the chance to escape death he refused on the grounds that loyalty to the laws of the State, even if they condemned a man to death, had a greater claim on a man than considerations of his own safety or freedom. He upheld the liberty of thought, but he denied the right of rebellion. Speaking of a man's debt to his country as he lay manacled in prison he told Crito 'that you ought to reverence her and submit to her and work for her when she is in need, for your country more than for your father, and either win her consent or obey her will, suffer what she bids you suffer, and hold your peace; be it imprisonment, or blows, or wounds in war, or death—it must be borne, and it is right that it should be borne; there must be no yielding, no running away, no deserting one's post.' Nowhere else in history do we find a man who saw both sides of the political problem so clearly, who weighed so justly the rights of the individual and the claims of society.

Under the early Roman Empire freedom of conscience was general because of the diversity of religious faiths held by its subjects. Before long, however, an exception was made in the case of the Christians and the famous persecutions began. Christians were condemned to death because their faith was incompatible with the worship of the Emperor, the one obligatory rite throughout the Empire; they were thus persecuted on political rather than religious grounds. These persecutions came to an end when Constantine published the Edict of Toleration in 313. They had evidently failed in their object, and their failure proves the fallacy of persecution as a means of rooting out unpleasant doctrines. The words of Gamaliel to the court which tried to silence St. Peter and his friends are those by which all attempts at the suppression of freedom of thought stand condemned: 'Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.' *Magna est veritas et praevalabit!* On a long view history justifies this optimism. Persecution may drive opinions underground, as the tenets of the Albigensians were crushed by St. Dominic's Inquisition; but the heresies of to-day are the orthodoxies of to-morrow, and those same tenets reappeared with Hus and Luther and Calvin. Persecution can never enjoy more than a temporary success; nor is it ever justifiable, because no one is convinced if an argument is decided by force. Nor, finally, does it pay. It amounts to nothing more than cutting off your nose to spite your face, as the poverty created in France by the expulsion of the Huguenots in 1685 proved.

From being in the position of a persecuted minority

the Church rose to the position of a persecuting majority. Throughout the Middle Ages, the Age of Faith, or more correctly, the Age of Authority, reason was not free. Heresies were regarded not merely as wrong but as seditious. Heretics were dangerous enemies to society and were treated as such. If you admit the truth of the premise, the apology of the Church for meting out this treatment to those who disagreed with her is entirely convincing. The premise is that the way to salvation has been revealed to the Roman Church alone; in their own interest, therefore, men should accept its authority as a guide through the jungle of errors in this world. The text *Compel them to come in* was thus the orthodox excuse for persecutions from the time of Augustine onwards. When Abelard claimed that 'by doubting we come to question, and by seeking we may come upon truth,' he was speaking like a Greek, not like a monk; in consequence his opinions were condemned and his books burned.

With the Renaissance, the Discovery of Man, as it has been called, a revival of critical thinking took place. The new individualism disintegrated the uniformity of medieval belief. A renewed curiosity led to the adoption of the experimental method in all branches of life. The potentialities of Man were discovered and exploited by such representative figures as Leonardo da Vinci, Shakespeare and Bacon. At the same time this individualism created the Reformation and the Reformation introduced an era of wars and persecutions on a horrible scale. The Presbyterian was as intolerant as his Jesuit opponent; Calvin created an even more soul-destroying uniformity in Geneva than the Inquisition did in Spain. So, when the services rendered by the new movements to the cause of freedom

of thought are considered, we must distinguish between the intolerant Reformers, who predominated at the time, and the tolerant Humanists whose views ultimately triumphed. Luther and Calvin stood for the past; Erasmus and Montaigne for the future. 'It is setting a high value on one's opinions,' said the latter, 'to roast men on account of them.'

The Protestant Reformers laid the foundation of their religion in the integrity of the individual's interpretation of the scriptures; they claimed freedom of conscience or, as it came to be called, the Inner Light, in obedience to which Socrates had died. Such a principle was bound to lead in the end to toleration of divers religious opinions. This truth was first seen by the most radical of the sects, the Anabaptists, and toleration was first practised in the American colonies where sects which had been exiled by persecution in Europe founded their religious democracies. It was the rule not only in the Quaker colony of Pennsylvania, but in the Roman Catholic colony of Maryland; and it was first openly stated by Roger Williams, the founder of the Baptist community of Rhode Island: 'all civil states with their offices of justice in their respective constitutions and administrations, are essentially proved civil and therefore not judges, governors or defenders of the spiritual state of worship.'

It was by means of this distinction between the religious and secular activities of a society, this refusal to identify Church with State, that toleration was won. The civil State had no business, it was held, to control the consciences of its members. In France, after many years of devastating strife caused by religious differences, both the Huguenots and the Catholic *Politiques* came to this sensible conclusion; Henry IV has the honour

of being the first Sovereign to tolerate opposing religious views by his Edict of Nantes (1598). When Louis XIV revoked that Edict in 1685 he merely showed what little conception he had either of statesmanship or justice.

Meanwhile the practical advantages of toleration had been proved in the states where it existed. Both Brandenburg and the United Provinces developed rapidly because they made no religious distinctions. English observers were particularly impressed by the prosperity which was to be attributed to this state of affairs. When the Revolution of 1688 was completed the Whigs hastened to reward their political allies, the Dissenters, with the Act of Toleration. They realized that such an Act was likely to increase the prosperity as well as the unity of the kingdom. But they were taking no risks. They granted nothing more than freedom of worship. They did not even repeal the recusancy laws against the Catholics; they just did not enforce them. Nor did they repeal the Test Act, which prohibited anyone who was not an Anglican from participating in political affairs. Dissenters and Catholics had to wait till 1829 before they were enfranchised, and Jews till as late as 1858.

The men who passed this Act in 1689 had been influenced by the arguments of their apologist, John Locke, in his *Letter Concerning Toleration* published that year. Locke was then living in Amsterdam, where he was much impressed by the benefits accruing from Toleration. He puts forward his views in a sensible, if uninspired, manner. His basic principle is the separation between the religious and civil powers: 'Render unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's.' 'The care of souls cannot belong to the civil magistrate, because his power con-

sists only in outward force; but true and saving religion consists in the inward persuasion of the mind.' Force therefore is no argument, 'only light and evidence can work a change in man's opinions.' Nor is persecution ever justified, for it is not your business to save your neighbour's soul. Without toleration peace, unity and prosperity cannot exist within the State. But where opinions lead to anti-social acts the State must interfere: 'no opinions contrary to human society, or to those moral rules which are necessary to the preservation of Civil society, are to be tolerated by the magistrate.' This might, of course, give very wide powers to the State; but Locke limits them to two cases in which toleration cannot be granted—those who recognize a Sovereign other than the one designated by the law of the land (Jacobites, for example, or Papists, if they accept the Pope as superior to the king in civil affairs); and those, such as atheists who, because they do not believe in God, cannot be trusted to keep their promises.

In France liberty of worship was the fruit of the Revolution; in Prussia it was granted by Frederick the Great because he was a free thinker, and in Italy Cavour included it in the constitution of the new kingdom. But for many years after liberty of worship had been granted toleration was by no means complete. For a long time authority contested the right to speak freely on religious questions with the threat of prosecution for blasphemy. Such laws were the weapons used to oppose new 'heresies' such as Deism, Materialism or Rationalism. In the early nineteenth century many obscure Englishmen, mostly Chartists, suffered long terms of imprisonment for hawking Paine's *Age of Reason* (1794) about the countryside. The disciples of Darwin did not suffer such persecution, but they were

and are attacked violently for their opinions, and are still occasionally prevented from holding teaching posts.

Freedom of the Press is closely associated with the cause of Religious Toleration. The most inspired plea on its behalf occurs in Milton's *Areopagitica* (1644). With magnificent optimism, Milton claims freedom of speech as essential to the advance of knowledge—

“Though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting to mis-doubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple; whoever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter?.... Who knows not that Truth is strong, next to the Almighty; she needs no policies, no stratagems, no licensings to make her victorious; those are the shifts and defences that error makes against her power....’

Certainly the intellectual advances made by our civilization would have been impossible without this freedom. It is enough to see what happened to the researches of Roger Bacon in the thirteenth century, or to contemplate the intellectual paralysis which creeps over a community once freedom is denied by a Calvin or a Napoleon. Of course the pursuit of Error becomes just as possible as the pursuit of Truth. The logical standpoint in this respect is therefore Voltaire's, that redoubtable champion: ‘I do not agree with a word you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.’

Freedom of the Press is the Ark of the Covenant of Democracy because public criticism is essential to the working of its institutions. Never has criticism been more necessary than to-day, when the weapons of pro-

paganda are so strong and so subtle. But, like other liberties, this also must be limited. The extent to which criticism is free varies with the Press Laws of every country; in England it is at first sight astonishing to find that it is not even officially recognized. There is no passage in the Statute Book analogous to Article XI of the Declaration of the Rights of Man: 'The free communication of ideas and opinions is one of the most precious of the rights of man.'

Liberty of the Press was created in this country in a very simple way. In 1695 Parliament refused to renew the Licensing Act passed under Charles II. Censorship was thus abolished, but for the most curious reasons. The Act, says Macaulay, 'is condemned, not as a thing essentially evil, but on account of the petty grievances, the exactions, the jobs, the commercial restrictions, the domiciliary visits, which were incidental to it.... Such were the arguments which did what Milton's *Areopagitica* had failed to do.' This essential liberty was acquired, as others have been acquired in England, only as a by-product of Parliament's struggle to gain a supremacy. The licensing power, as the censorship was then called, constituted an arbitrary power in the hands of the executive, at that time the King; it was therefore abolished when other discretionary powers, such as the right to dispense laws passed by Parliament, were swept away by the triumphant Whigs.

Censorship still exists as a 'quaint survival' in two important activities to-day: the stage and the cinema. It may be defended on the plea that subversive ideas are more potent when seen or heard than when read on the printed page. But it has been attacked from innumerable angles. Mankind is naturally conservative to such an extent that there is no need to enforce the

tyranny of the tastes and ideas of the majority with the force of law. 'There is a limit,' says Mill, 'to the legitimate interference of collective opinion with individual independence.' Who is entitled to act as censor? Who is so divinely right in his views that he may judge what is good for others?¹

A common excuse for the prohibition of a film, a play, or a book is on the grounds of obscenity. To limit ourselves for a moment to the question of censorship of books, how is obscenity defined? The rule is that laid down by Justice Cockburn in 1857—'Whether the tendency is to deprave those whose minds are open to such immoral influences.' Rigorously applied this ruling would condemn most of the great books of the world, the Bible, Shakespeare, Rabelais, Sterne. Yet those authors are read and studied, while others, Lawrence, Huxley, Joyce, are condemned in some countries (notably the Irish Free State) and admired in others. One thing is certain: to condemn a book is to advertise it, and the demand for it increases out of all proportion to its real worth.

That the Press is free in this country by custom rather than by law, is shown by the following legal definition by Lord Mansfield: 'The liberty of the press consists in printing without any previous license, subject to the consequences of law.' 'It is neither more nor less than this,' adds another judge, 'that a man may publish anything which twelve of his countrymen think is not blamable, but that he ought to be punished if he publishes that which is blamable.'

¹ As a matter of fact this claim is frequently made in Dictatorship states. Cp., Dr. Goebbels: 'Since we National-Socialists are convinced that we are right, we cannot tolerate anybody who contends that he is right. For if he, too, is right, he must be a National-Socialist, or if he is not a National-Socialist, then he is simply not right.'

The most important law which limits the free expression of opinion is the law of libel. The incidence of this law is at present so severe that agitation is on foot to restrict it to within reasonable bounds. Libel is to be construed not only as blamable comment on the character of an individual, but also as that which attacks a government with seditious intentions. 'A seditious intention,' says Dicey, 'means an intention to bring into hatred or contempt, or to excite disaffection against the King or the government and constitution of the United Kingdom as by law established, or either House of Parliament, or the administration of justice, or to excite British subjects to attempt otherwise than by lawful means the alteration of any matter in Church or State by law established, or to promote feelings of ill-will and hostility between different classes.' Finally there is libel on God, i.e., blasphemy. The enforcement of these laws has been considerably relaxed in recent years. Within these limits the Press is free; but it can be seen that the laws of Libel, Sedition, Blasphemy and Obscenity are extremely wide in their powers and could be made very oppressive. Fortunately, except in a crisis, they are seldom exercised with the full rigour which their nature permits.

We have described some aspects in the evolution of Religious Toleration and the Liberty of the Press. There remains the subject of the Right of Public Meeting or Discussion. Once more we are presented with a contrast between the abstract Declaration of this right to be found in some Continental constitutions and the particular circumstances under which British citizens are permitted to meet together to air their views. According to foreigners, tub-thumping in Hyde Park is the best illustration of the wide degree of liberty of

speech that prevails in Britain. But, as Dicey points out, this right of public meeting is limited in two ways. 'The object of a meeting may be to commit a crime by open force, or in some way or other to break the peace, in which case the meeting itself becomes an unlawful assembly. The mode in which the meeting is held may threaten a breach of the peace on the part of those holding the meeting, and therefore inspire peaceable citizens with reasonable fear; in which case, again, the meeting will be unlawful.'

Liberty of speech in public is much more severely limited than the liberty of the Press. It is right that it should be so. By the written word a man seeks to convince by rational argument, and the greatest possible freedom should be given him to do so; but by the spoken word an orator usually tries to sway the emotions of his audience and sometimes disorder results. The difficult point which the magistrate has to decide is whether the words spoken at a meeting are merely a legitimate expression of discontent, or whether they constitute an incitement to violence which will result in a breach of the peace. To take a contemporary example, an inflammatory speech on the Jewish question may be permitted in the middle of Salisbury Plain, but it should be prohibited in the Jewish quarter of Whitechapel.

On what general grounds may Freedom of Thought be justified? The classical statement is John Stuart Mill's essay *On Liberty* (1859), a book which Charles Kingsley declared 'made him a clearer-headed, braver-minded man on the spot.' Mill's defence of Liberty is not, as it would have been with an earlier thinker, on the grounds of Natural Right, but on the grounds of Utility. He regards Liberty as essentially *useful*, not as

an end in itself, but as the very air which the human spirit must breathe if it is to develop to its full stature. It is just as useful to the State as it is to the individual, because the wheels of the machinery of government will run more smoothly if there is a safety valve for discontent in the form of a free Press. Mill does not make much of this last point, because his main object is to delimit the region of individual freedom from invasion by the State, or from the far more insidious danger of the tyranny of public opinion.

His apology for freedom of opinion is so convincingly put that it must be quoted in full:

'First, if any opinion is compelled to silence, that opinion may, for aught we can certainly know, be true. To deny this is to assume our own infallibility.

'Secondly, though the silenced opinion be an error, it may, and very commonly does, contain a portion of truth; and since the general or prevailing opinion on any subject is rarely or never the whole truth, it is only by the collision of adverse opinions that the remainder of the truth has any chance of being supplied.

'Thirdly, even if the received opinion be not only true, but the whole truth, unless it is suffered to be, and actually is, vigorously and earnestly contested, it will, by most of those who receive it, be held in the manner of a prejudice, with little comprehension or feeling on its rational grounds. And not only this, but, fourthly, the meaning of the doctrine itself will be in danger of being lost, or enfeebled, and deprived of its vital effect on the character and conduct: the dogma becoming a mere formal profession, inefficacious for good, but cumbering the ground, and preventing the growth of any real and heartfelt conviction, from reason or personal experience.'

In this chapter we have seen how the demand for free speech arose, on what grounds it is to be justified and within what limits it exists in a democratic country such as our own. Except in times of crisis its existence is pretty secure. But it is exactly at such exceptional moments that the question becomes one of acute importance. It is obviously impossible to lay down any rule regarding the extent of individual liberty compatible with the security of the whole at such moments. In times of war, for example, is the conscientious objector free to spread his views or even to hold them? The liberal would answer that to deny him freedom of conscience in this matter would be totally unjustifiable; but he might be willing to admit that the holding of pacifist meetings would only lead to internal disorder which would imperil the safety of the State. To what degree, again, is it right for a government to stifle criticism in the interests of propaganda? Is censorship legitimate in times of crisis? These are highly debatable questions the answers to which largely depend on the circumstances of each particular case.

At this date few people would be found to favour a revival of religious persecution. But politics have taken the place of religion as a subject about which men hold passionate views. In consequence persecution has once more reared its ugly head. The fight for Liberty has to be renewed by every generation. To many people Freedom of Thought is the greatest prize to be won because it is the one condition of existence which makes life worth living. Our forefathers certainly regarded it in this light, and it is the duty of everyone who believes in Democracy to guard it carefully with eternal vigilance. 'If the history of civilization has any lesson to teach,' wrote Professor Bury, 'it is this: there is one supreme

condition of mental and moral progress which is completely within the power of man himself to secure, and that is perfect liberty of thought and discussion. The establishment of this liberty may be considered the most valuable achievement of modern civilization, and as a condition of social progress it should be deemed fundamental.'

SUGGESTED READING:

*J. B. Bury. *History of the Freedom of Thought*. Home University Library. 1913.

*J. S. Mill. *On Liberty*. Thinker's Library. 1859.

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II

SELF GOVERNMENT

THE most famous definition of Democracy is Lincoln's: 'Government of the People, by the People, for the People.' This is a good definition of pure Democracy; but the existence of this pure or direct form, such as was to be found in the Swiss cantons, is incompatible with the dimensions of the modern state. Nowadays the People do not govern themselves in actual fact: the majority impose their will by means of representatives. This alternative, indirect, form is more correctly termed Parliamentary Democracy, because it functions by means of representatives meeting in parliament. As our own constitution proves, Democracy of this type can exist within the form of a Monarchy, provided that the institutions of the State admit a genuine expression of the popular will.

How, then, can we recognize the existence of Democracy from a political point of view, if it may equally well be called a Republic or a Constitutional Monarchy? Simply by noting whether the State is founded on Right or on Force, on government by consent or by oppression. The outward and visible sign of the existence of political liberty is a constitution in which a freely elected body of representatives, working by means of a party system which ensures effective public criticism, is the supreme law-making power in the State. Democracy is, in fact, a political method or framework by means of which social changes can be made by the

majority of members composing a society. This type of constitution may be contrasted with Absolute Monarchy, the irresponsible will of one; or with Oligarchy, the rule of a dominant party, as in Italy, Germany or Russia. Despotism and Dictatorship are words to be avoided in this context because they merely imply arbitrary rule, equally well that of majority as of one man. In Democracy, on the other hand, there exists the Rule of Law. The ideal of this type of liberal state is, in fact, that stated by Rousseau: 'a form of association which shall defend and protect the person and goods of each member with all the force of the community, and by which each man, while uniting himself with all the others, shall nevertheless obey himself alone and remain as free as before.'

Every man is born free, says the democrat. Free in what sense? Certainly not to do exactly as he pleases. He is born a member of a family, which is itself a cell of the larger organism called the State; he is educated and protected as he grows up by the society of which he is a member; when he comes of age he has to earn a living on terms dictated to him by others. If he regards himself as a free agent and becomes drunk and disorderly, if he sells a chocolate or a cigarette at certain times of the day or night, a policeman promptly appears to clap him into gaol. How can such a person call himself free?

Because he exercises his *natural right* to have a say, however small, in the making or the unmaking of the very laws he so heartily detests. We do not believe now, as they did in the eighteenth century, that such a right exists in natural or primitive societies; the word is used, rather, in the Greek sense, as in the phrase 'Natural Law,' to mean what *ought* to be, that which is funda-

mental or axiomatic. 'Nature' in this sense implies an objective standard of what is Right, something rooted in the very nature of things.

In France democrats have always made great play with this phrase, 'natural rights'. But Englishmen have fought shy of it because they unconsciously recognize its ambiguity of meaning, in that it confuses moral with legal rights—what in practice you actually may do, with what you think you should be able to do. The movement towards self-government in this country has been in the nature of a gradual recognition of definite legal rights, and the motives have been more materialistic than idealistic. New liberties have been acquired piecemeal: liberty from arbitrary arrest, from religious oppression, from the prohibition of associations. The founders of our democracy regarded these rights, not so much as 'natural' in the philosophic sense, but as their actual native birthright of which they had somehow been deprived in the distant past. The Levellers, for example, in 1647 demanded universal suffrage and religious toleration 'because these things we declare to be our native rights.' In this country the individual has been at pains to stress the inviolability of such rights; he has proved by war and revolution that there are certain activities with which the State may not interfere.

Such a negative movement, 'Man versus the State' as Spencer called it, might tend towards the disintegration of society. But, as Aristotle pointed out, man is by nature a political or sociable animal. Much as the Englishman has stressed his Rights, he has not altogether forgotten his Duties. Rights and Duties represent the negative and positive aspects of politics. In an age of individualism, when the State was pros-

perous and stable, it was easy for Mill to define Liberty as 'the absence of restraints'. But in a time of crisis the positive aspect, the duties a man owes to the State and the duty of the State to the whole, are more in evidence. Liberty may be the supreme good in politics, but if the citizen does not perform the duties incumbent upon him as a member of a self-governing body the liberty he enjoys will be taken away from him. He must govern himself and not let others do it for him; he must use his vote in parliamentary or municipal elections; he must be tolerant of others, if he wishes himself to be tolerated. Liberty does not mean just independence; it implies a capacity for self-discipline which will make use of freedom as the necessary condition for the development of the good life.

* * * * *

The first experiment in Democracy was made in ancient Athens. Here is part of Pericles' description of it, as reported by Thucydides:

'Its administration favours the many instead of the few; this is why it is called a democracy. If we look to the laws, they afford equal justice to all in their private differences; if to social standing, advancement in public life falls to reputation for capacity, class considerations not being allowed to interfere with merit; nor again does poverty bar the way; if a man is able to serve the state, he is not hindered by the obscurity of his condition. The freedom which we enjoy in our government extends also to our ordinary life. Thus, far from exercising a jealous surveillance over each other, we do not feel called upon to be angry with our neighbour for doing what he likes....'

A great degree of Liberty and Equality certainly flourished in Athens. Any citizen might be called upon to fill an executive office if chosen by ballot. Consequently many of the problems of modern Democracy were already apparent to the Greeks; so we have, in the Sophists, the forerunners of the Fascists; in Plato (at least in *The Republic*) the first Communist; and in Aristotle the first political scientist. But in two fundamental ways the Greek commonwealth differed from our own. As citizenship was denied to slaves and to women it is clear that *all* its members were not free or equal. Furthermore, Athens was such a small state that it was possible for citizens to meet together and settle their affairs at a public meeting.

The problem how to reconcile self-government with a big population was solved by the invention of the technique of Representation. In England this principle dates back to Henry II, who used representatives to discuss local affairs in the law courts. In the reign of Edward I it was applied to the High Court of Parliament. At the same time the fundamental democratic principle of No Taxation Without Representation was expressed in one of his statutes—*Quod omnes tangit ab omnibus approbetur*.

It is wrong to call Democracy the child of the Reformation, for its roots lie deep in the Middle Ages. Before that period came to an end the principle of Popular Representation had made headway in most of the countries in the west: in the institution of the House of Commons, in the Cortes of Spain and the States General of France. Furthermore, as we have seen, the Rule of Law limited the powers of the ruler. Lord Acton was of the opinion that 'we owe the rise of civil liberty' to the medieval conflict of Church and State.

The protagonists of both sides agreed that rulers aiming at personal gain rather than the public weal were tyrants who could be legitimately deposed. In his *Defensor Pacis* the most radical of all medieval thinkers, Marsiglio of Padua, argues the case in words which almost amount to the enunciation of popular sovereignty: 'Laws derive their authority from the nation and are invalid without its assent.... In obeying laws to which all men have agreed, all men, in reality, govern themselves.... The King is responsible to the nation and subject to the Laws.' Wycliffe, too, in his feudal theory of Lordship shows that a ruler may be deposed if he does not fulfil the functions of his office. But it is a long way from such views on the limitation of the ruler to the modern claim that all men are free and equal in respect of their rights.

The idea of self-government received a serious setback in the sixteenth century. The Renaissance Despot obliterated nearly every trace of popular sovereignty. The squat figure of Luther stands as the representative of that epoch. Certainly, he was no democrat. He did everything he could to strengthen the hands of the Godly Prince. But he was forced by his religious principles to admit one limitation to the power of the prince—he had no right to interpret the Scriptures for others; that was a matter for the individual conscience, the Inner Light; if a prince did overstep the bounds in this respect his subjects had the right to rebel. It was through this one admission that religious democracy, for which Luther was responsible, developed into political democracy.

When extreme Protestants, such as the French or Scottish Presbyterians, the Levellers, Independents, Anabaptists or Quakers, found themselves in the

position of persecuted minorities, they applied the principle of the Inner Light to political matters. Hence the first genuine expression of democratic ideas was made by these sects in the New England colonies where they set up the first democracies. This is how a Leveller soldier argued the question: 'I can break engagements in case they prove unjust and that it may appear so to my conscience. That whatever hopes or obligations I should be bound unto, if afterwards God should reveal himself, I would break it speedily, if it were an hundred a day.' No wonder Colonel Ireton, himself a Puritan, exclaimed: 'When I do hear men speak of laying aside all engagements to consider only that wild and vast notion of what in every man's conception is just or unjust, I am afraid that I tremble at the boundless consequences of it.'

In the meantime professional philosophers, such as the French author of the *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos* (1576), were beginning to fashion a bridle for despots in order to preserve religious freedom. These thinkers were partly inspired by the medieval idea of the Rule of Law, a law superior to the law of princes because it was divine or 'natural.' They also took over another idea implicit in the theory of Feudalism, the idea of Contract: if a ruler did not fulfil the functions of his office he might be deposed. These ideas were the progenitors of that strange notion—the Social Contract. It was thought that in some distant past a body of free men living in a 'state of nature' met together and appointed a ruler on terms. In England the idea did little to achieve popular sovereignty. Far more important was the abolition of concrete grievances, visible weapons of religious and financial tyranny—Charles Stuart, Archbishop Laud, the Star Chamber,

or the Judges who forced men to pay iniquitous taxes or practise papistical ceremonies. But when, in 1688, the middleclasses atlast succeeded in wresting sovereign power from the hands of the Stuarts, and showed in the Bill of Rights and the Act of Settlement that Parliament in actual fact decided who was to be king and on what terms, some justification for their action was felt to be desirable.

John Locke in his *Discourses of Civil Government* (1690) provided the justification by bringing the theory of the Social Contract up-to-date. He was a philosopher not an historian, so he did not worry his readers with inquiries whether the Contract was an historical fact or not; his business was not to consider the origins of the State, but to explain its nature as it existed after 1688. His chief point is a distinction between Government and Society. The state of nature, he says, was a state of complete freedom. To avoid the insecurity of such an existence men banded together to form a community; this was the first and irrevocable part of the Contract, the pact of union. Then they decided to institute a government 'for the mutual preservation of their lives, liberties and estates, which I call by the general name, property.' This is the second part of the Contract, the pact of subjection. But such a government was by no means arbitrary or even sovereign. It was instituted on terms and it could, in the last resort, be changed by an 'appeal to heaven,' i.e. by revolution. What were the terms? To rule equably in the interest of the public good and 'not to raise taxes on the property of the people without the consent of the people.' Locke provided a lucid, logical explanation of the constitution as it existed after 1688. He regarded the State as a joint stock company in which every property-

holder had a share, a company instituted by a body of rules (e.g., the Bill of Rights), which cover particular activities but do not extend over the whole of an individual's life. It was a business-man's concern; if a man had no property he played no part in the State. All men were equal before the law, but it was quite clear to Locke that all men were not equally entitled to make the law.

Jean Jacques Rousseau was far more of a democrat. He was not satisfied with this limited explanation of the nature of the State. His chief contribution to the philosophy of politics, *Du Contrat Social* (1762), is an extremely difficult book, nor was it ever completed. No one who read the startling sentence with which it opens, 'All men are born free, but everywhere they are in chains,' could fail to read this short treatise to the end. Whether he would understand what he had read may well be doubted. Rousseau is a profound, inconsistent, idealistic writer. Everyone who reads him has a different idea of what he means. The result has been that his book has given rise to completely contradictory views as to the nature of the State: Rousseau is equally the father of the Declaration of Rights and of the Authoritarian state.¹

How does this extraordinary divergence come about? Like Locke, he uses the theory of the Social Contract, but he interprets it in an entirely different manner. There is only one Contract—the pact of union. 'Each of us gives his person and total power to the common cause, under the supreme authority of the General Will, and we receive every member as an integral part of our group.' To go on to make a pact of subjection, as

¹ See below on Fascism, and also for a further definition of the General Will.

the English do when they delegate the sovereignty which rightly belongs to the whole people to the representatives of a single party, is, in his view, the suicide of liberty. Sovereignty is inalienable. Once the people have formed themselves into a state (he had in mind a state the size of his native Geneva), the individual has no rights against the State whatever: he is a member of the State and he must abide by the General Will, which is not even necessarily the Will of All. If he objects he will be 'forced to be free.' In the place of his original insecure independence in the state of nature he acquires the more perfect liberty of society. Exactly what that liberty amounts to, what the General Will is and how it is to find expression in law, are problems too profound to be examined here. Suffice it to note that Rousseau provides dynamite for revolution in his claim that every man is born free and that sovereign power rightly belongs to the people; but he also provides an excuse for the most complete of tyrannies, subjection to a State which somehow knows better than the individual himself what is good for him.

If Rousseau is such a difficult and inconsistent author why is he hailed as the prophet of Democracy? Because, before he lost himself in metaphysical speculations, he stated certain revolutionary principles clearly and strongly. The fundamental idea that runs through all his work, is that Man is Good, but that civilization has corrupted him. Back to Nature! is his cry. In education and in politics man should be allowed to develop freely and naturally without restraint. The State should foster opportunities for individual betterment and guide him on his way. But in addition to the idea of Freedom he announces an even more revolutionary idea: that all men have an equal right to better them-

selves, in other words, to the pursuit of happiness. It is in this conception of Equality that we can see what an advance he makes on Locke. The idea that all men, even bootblacks and dustmen, have the same rights was preposterous to his contemporaries. No wonder they burned his books. Most people thought that men were by no means naturally good; if left to themselves they would prove both bad and stupid; therefore they must be ruled by their superiors. Rousseau, however, denied that there were any superiors. He was not so foolish as to say that all men were born with equal abilities, but he did say that they should be treated as having an equal right to make the most of their abilities.

With that aim Democracy exists. Mill argues the case for the freedom of the individual very cogently in his essay. 'The initiation of all wise or noble things comes, and must come, from individuals; generally at first from some one individual.' 'The worth of a State,' he concludes, 'is the worth of the individuals composing it; and a State which postpones the interests of *their* mental expansion and elevation, to a little more of administrative skill; a State which dwarfs its men in order that they may be more docile instruments in its hands even for beneficial purposes—will find that with small men no great thing can really be accomplished; and that the perfection of machinery to which it has sacrificed everything will in the end avail it nothing, for want of the vital power which, in order that the machine might work more smoothly, it has preferred to banish.' If the last war proved anything it proved the truth of that view and thereby vindicated Democracy.

The theory of the Social Contract performed great

services in the evolution of Democracy. It justified, and in some measure, created the English, American and French Revolutions. But its unhistorical nature did not commend it to thinkers of the generation which succeeded Rousseau. Consequently Jeremy Bentham, the founder of English Radicalism, threw it overboard as 'a mere rattle.' He had no patience with philosophical toys, 'nonsense on stilts' he called them. He preferred to give a perfectly rational explanation of the nature of the State. What he and his contemporary, Adam Smith, set out to do was to prove that it *pays* to be free. Freedom, in other words, is not to be regarded as a natural and inalienable Right, but as a business proposition. No wonder the philosophy of Utilitarianism commended itself to the middle-class Briton. No wonder that it was put into force much more rapidly than has been the case with most philosophies.

Bentham lived the life of an obscure philosopher until he met James Mill in 1808. Then, in his old age, a school which included all the outstanding Whigs and radicals of the day gathered round him—Francis Place, Joseph Hume, Romilly, Chadwick, the younger Mill, Cobden and Bright.

He elucidated and systematized various half-formulated ideas in the air at the moment. Hence his enormous popularity. The mainspring of the philosophy he made out of these ideas was the Pleasure-Pain principle.¹ Assuming (it is a big assumption, but fundamental to Utilitarianism) that man is a rational animal, every man should know his own interest best. In this he found himself in agreement with Smith's doctrine of the Harmony of Interests, that the State becomes rich in proportion to every member becoming rich individually. Egoism was sanctified as a public virtue. The idea was not so far removed from Rousseau as its adherents might have hoped. '*Il faut être soi,*' said Rousseau. Give everyone a free hand in running his business, said Adam Smith.

In accordance with this view Bentham defined the aim of the State as the Greatest Happiness of the Greatest Number. To achieve it, the activities of the Government must be reduced to the minimum; hence the policy of *laissez-faire*. No laws, the Corn Laws for example, should exist which favour particular classes; in industry the State should allow every individual to run his own business in his own way. To make certain that such a policy is pursued every man should have a say in the government of the country. Hence the Benthamite principle—Every Man to Count as One and No Man to Count as more than One. Just as the Pleasure-Pain principle provides a moral arithmetic, so does this democratic maxim provide a simple sum in political arithmetic. Democracy, in fact, amounts

¹ 'By the principle of Utility is meant that principle which approves or disapproves of every action, according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question; or in other words, to promote or to oppose that happiness.'—Bentham.

to no more than the business of counting heads. The essence of the theory is a demand for the emancipation of the individual and the free exercise of enlightened self-interest. How fallacious it has proved in actual fact, how it deteriorated into the worship of what Henry James called 'the bitch goddess—Success,' will be seen in the next chapter; but modern Democracy certainly came into existence through its application.

The year 1776 in which Bentham published his *Fragment on Government* and Smith his *Wealth of Nations*, is a landmark in the evolution of Democracy. These two books expressed the ideas which lie at the base of Parliamentary Democracy and of industrial Capitalism. In the same year the biggest of all democracies came into existence with the *Declaration of Independence* in the United States. And at the same date that fiery old radical, Major Cartwright, issued his *Programme* for Parliamentary Reform.

The progress of Democracy in this country can be measured by the way in which Cartwright's proposals became law. It took a hundred and fifty years for the process to become complete, and that it did become complete was due, not to popular agitation such as that of the Chartists who incorporated his programme in their Charter, but to the logic of Utilitarianism working in an atmosphere of prosperity secure enough to allow men to sympathize with the ideals of Freedom and Equality. The demand for Annual Parliaments never became law, because experience showed that it hindered rather than increased the efficiency of the political machine. But all the other items were adopted: adult suffrage for men and women in the Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, 1884, 1918 and 1928; the abolition of property qualifications for M.P.s and their

payment (thus enabling working men to enter Parliament) in 1858 and 1911; in 1872 secrecy in voting was assured by the Ballot Act; and finally, by a series of enactments, voting districts were made approximately equal as the population shifted.

* * * * *

Political liberty is based on the assumption that men can and will rule themselves. It presupposes that men are rational, that they know their own interests, that they will respect the rights of others, and that they will make use of the freedom they have won. The democrat argues that the only secure and the only rational form of government is that which is based on consent and on the participation of all in the making of the laws. The authoritarian, the Fascist for example, denies every one of these statements. The freedom found in Parliamentary Democracies, he says, results in anarchy. Whereas the democrat is of the opinion that men will grow better and learn self-restraint the more liberty and responsibility they have, the authoritarian argues that such liberty is a licence which results in the relaxation of social discipline. Men, he says, become egoists, thinking too much of their so-called rights and too little of their duties. Men are naturally bad; the State is there to make them good. If the functions of the State amount to no more than 'administrative nihilism,' i.e. protection without interference, the result will be national decadence.

In reply to this pessimistic view the democrat may point to the lesson of history. Which has the greater survival power—Democracy or Dictatorship? Herodotus had no doubt about the matter: 'It is plain enough that freedom is an excellent thing, since even

the Athenians, who, while they continued to live under the rule of tyrants, were not a whit more valiant than any of their neighbours, no sooner shook off the yoke than they become decidedly the first of all.' And as Athens was victorious in the first war against an authoritarian state, so an alliance of democracies was victorious in the last war against just such a state.

Though Democracy has been proved to have greater staying power than any other political system, it is in great danger to-day. At the beginning of this century it was taken for granted to be the final stage in the development of human society. But we have discovered that we have to pay the price of liberty. The difficulties of making a success of parliamentary democracy in large industrial states have become more and more apparent. It is no longer safe to take liberty for granted. Democracy is in danger of going stale through the laziness of its members. Our ancestors found it an exciting thing to fight for those liberties which, now we enjoy them, lack the glamour they once had. There is little emotional appeal in the working of the mother of parliaments.¹ 'Eternal vigilance,' therefore, must be the rule if those liberties are to be preserved. If, in normal times, any particular liberty is invaded protest must be prompt. When, for example, a recent badly drafted Bill threatened to restore the right of search for seditious literature to the government, there was an immediate complaint that this infringed a liberty won by Wilkes in 1763. In deference to the outcry the Bill was redrafted.

Another serious danger is the ignorance of the electorate. The business of modern government has

¹ Hence the importance of the institution of monarchy, which embodies a national unity above parties.

become so complex that the man in the street can never hope to master such technical matters as Housing, Tariffs, the Gold Standard, and what not. The result is that vague words, symbols, or colourful personalities appeal more than detailed discussion about political issues. 'Leave it to the expert,' grumbles the modern citizen, 'after all, what difference does it make which way I vote? My vote is of such infinitesimal importance in deciding the result. Anyway, politics bore me.' Optimistic liberals in the last century thought that such a childish attitude would vanish once education had become general. But what has happened? Most electors have been educated just sufficiently to teach them to read, but not to test the value of what they read. The Press, for the most part, is not interested in educating the electorate in political matters. The fundamental rights and wrongs of a question would bore the casual reader whose taste they wish to satisfy: The best way to earn quick profits is to tickle the vanity of the mob by telling it that its prejudices are always right. Hence the sensational Press reduces politics to the lowest denominator by making an election a matter of so-and-so's pipe, somebody else's trousers, Out with the Reds or In with the Blacks.

A far more insidious danger is the danger of standardization. Democracy is based on the idea that freedom enables an individual to develop his personality. The conditions of modern civilization make this extremely difficult. Scientific devices such as the Press, the Radio and the Cinema, have made public opinion stronger than ever before. The tyranny of fashion rules us. Unless we deliberately cultivate our individual tastes we all eat, wear, buy, think and do the same thing. No one can live in a big city without becoming

aware of the tendency of the urban dweller to live a sort of termite existence which stultifies originality. But that is not the fault of Democracy; the danger is present and much more so in the Authoritarian state, where originality is not unconsciously but deliberately crushed out of existence. Democracy cannot therefore be indicated in one and the same breath for leading to anarchy as well as to standardization.

In railway-carriages and restaurants and places where men talk you often hear the parrot cry: 'Democracy has failed.' Failed in what respects? 'To deliver the goods.' What goods? Compare the budgets of democratic and undemocratic countries (if available) and see which show the largest deficit. Trains run on time in Italy; they also run on time in Britain. Driven from this position your opponent will say that the parliamentary system is slow, corrupt and inefficient. Admittedly it is slow, chiefly because the pros and cons of a measure are properly considered beforehand. But we had recently an admirable example how quickly a measure can be passed if it is an urgent necessity: the nation transferred its allegiance from one king to another in twenty-four hours, a proceeding which would have necessitated a revolution in a non-democratic state. All the same it must be admitted that, since modern government is so complicated, the procedure of an institution like the House of Commons needs reform if it is to cope with the business efficiently.

In practice Parliamentary Democracy means the rule of the majority. What about minorities? Are they free? To a certain extent, yes; free, at least to influence, if not to enforce, a decision. But as a matter of fact every aspect of our daily life is not, thank Heaven, what is called a political question. Society is made up of a

network of voluntary associations or minorities. According to Acton, who was a Roman Catholic, 'the most certain test by which we may judge whether a country is really free is the amount of security enjoyed by minorities.' For full political liberty to exist individuals must be free to form such associations. Some are natural—the family, for instance; some are economic—professional bodies; some are religious, as the various Churches; some political, as the Labour or Fascist parties. According to the theory of Pluralism such bodies have a 'real' personality or existence of their own. The State, according to this view, is only one such association differing from others in the fact that membership is not voluntary but compulsory. If this be the case, the State has no right to interfere with other associations unless they prove dangerous to the security of the whole. Society, in brief, is in the nature of a federation of groups.

This is an extremely modern analysis of the State. Among thinkers since the Reformation, Althusius in the seventeenth century was the only one to hold such views. In recent times Gierke in Germany, Maitland and Figgis in this country, have revived interest in his theories by showing that they are relevant to modern conditions. The first minorities permitted to exist freely within the State were the Dissenting Churches. In the economic sphere organizations like the Co-operative Societies, Trades Unions and Employers' Federations have developed since the repeal of the Combination Acts in 1824.

By far the most important of these associations are the Trade Unions. Their existence was not legalized till 1875, and the use of their weapon—the right to strike—is still strongly contested. The question really

amounts to this: is the strike a purely industrial weapon or does it imperil the whole State? The answer therefore depends on whether the strike occurs in a major or a minor industry, and whether it is conducted in an orderly or disorderly fashion. The laws governing the issue, especially in the case of a general strike, are extremely complicated, but the general principle is clear enough. The problem of the conditions under which associations may exist is similar to that of the Right of Public Meeting discussed in the last chapter, and it has recently been raised on the political plane by the ban on party uniforms. A useful definition of the conditions upon which such associations may rightfully exist is provided by Professor Laski: 'Men are always entitled to form voluntary associations for the expression of grievance, and for the propagation of ideas which, as they think, will remedy what they believe to be wrong. They are not entitled to move to the commission of acts which bring them into conflict with the State.'

To conclude our discussion of what is implied by self-government it will be useful to consider the following summaries of the ideals which a democratic community sets before itself. The famous documents from which these selections are made, the American and French *Declarations of the Rights of Man*, should be read as statements of ideals, not as descriptions of historical fact. Read in the latter context they seem strangely ironical, for the first was made by slave-owners and the second by men who were shortly to deny any sort of rights to their political opponents. Indeed, many of the statements here set down may prove to be irreconcilable in practice. How far we have progressed along the road to the ideal State may be estimated by comparing

these classic statements of what Democracy stands for with the actual situation in which we find ourselves.

'We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights; that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness; that to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed' (1776).

- '1. Men are born and continue equal in respect of their rights. Social distinctions may be founded only upon the general good.
- '2. The aim of all political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.
- '3. The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation. No body nor individual may exercise any authority which does not proceed directly from the nation.
- '4. Liberty consists in the freedom to do everything which injures no one else....
- '6. Law is the expression of the general will. Every citizen has a right to participate personally, or through his representative, in its formation. It must be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes. All citizens, being equal in the eyes of the law, are equally eligible to all dignities and public positions and occupations, according to their abilities, and without distinction except that of their virtues and talents....
- '11. The free communication of ideas and opinions is one of the most precious of the rights of man. Every citizen may, accordingly, speak,

write, and print with freedom, but shall be responsible for such abuses of this freedom as shall be defined by law' (1791).

SUGGESTED READING:

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III

EQUALITY

THE words 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,' summarize the principles of '89. Every one of these words will bear a wealth of interpretation. For our present purpose it will be convenient to interpret Liberty as political in its implications, Equality as economic, and Fraternity as a term used in a more general social sense.

From this point of view Fraternity will depend on the extent of Liberty and Equality that exists in a community. The word implies that spirit of comradeship which is expressed particularly clearly in the hospitable instincts of the inhabitants of new countries where class distinctions are least in evidence. From another point of view Fraternity might be said to be another word for the Christian ideal of Charity—that generosity shown by members of a community to each other because they feel that they are all parts of the same body. In this sense Fraternity does not require the existence of Equality. It was an ideal frequently preached in the eighteenth century when social inequality was very marked. It inspired nineteenth-century humanitarians like Shaftesbury to try to palliate the inequalities of wealth and opportunity they saw around them by appealing to the spirit of pity and charity in the hearts of those largely responsible for this state of affairs.

To distinguish Liberty and Equality is more difficult.

They are really complementary ideas, and hence what follows should be regarded as in the nature of an appendix to our discussion of Liberty in the last chapter. The equal right of every one to vote, Political Equality, is much the same thing as political freedom. Civil Equality, or equality before the law, means that the freedom of every individual is secured by the laws of the State. From this standpoint it is obvious that Liberty cannot exist without some degree of Equality: I may be theoretically free to exercise my rights, but if the liberty to do so is in actual fact denied me by the existence of inequality I am little better off than I was before. This brings us to the third aspect of equality, Economic Equality. In this sphere Equality and Liberty have never existed together, simply because, if it were possible to give every man an equal opportunity to acquire wealth, some would acquire it quicker than others and inequality would come into existence once more. Economic Liberty is therefore the enemy of Equality. In consequence, as may be seen in Russia, some people prefer to sacrifice Liberty to Equality. It is doubtful if that will ever be the case in Britain. In this country there is almost a religion of inequality which has been sanctified by long tradition. As Gladstone said: 'There is no political idea which has entered less into the formation of the political system of this country than the love of equality.' Yet even here greater economic equality is aimed at nowadays. If the watchword of nineteenth-century Democracy was Liberty, it may well be that the watchword of twentieth-century Democracy will be Equality.

A comparison between the American and the French Declarations on the subject will help to make clear the meaning of Equality. The slave-holding authors of the

American constitution (Alexander Hamilton and his fellows) cheerfully declare that 'all men are created equal.' Taken literally, that statement is nonsense. There is far greater difference in the intellectual abilities of men than there is in their physiques. One man is a fool, another a genius; one man has administrative, another imaginative, capacity; it is unnecessary to labour the point. The idea behind this claim for Equality is more accurately expressed in the French Declaration: 'All men are born free and equal in respect of their rights.' That means that all men are to be *treated as equal*. The assumption is that there is something sacred about the individuality of each person, however humble. Be he rich or poor he is to be regarded as possessing certain inviolable rights.

The idea goes back to the teaching of St. Paul, that all men are equal 'in the sight of God.' This outlook was largely responsible for the success of the early Church among the lower classes of the Roman Empire. A great step in the advance of humanity was taken when it was realized that the Son of God was himself a carpenter's son, and that His disciples included poor fisherfolk as well as rich lawyers like Paul. The attitude that every individual soul was equally sacred never faded from Christian theology; but the social conditions of the Middle Ages made it unrealizable in actual fact. In the feudal hierarchy every man was born to a particular station in life and any attempt to pass from one station to another was impossible. In that stage of society the rights of Blood and Inheritance were supreme; they have by no means lost their pre-eminence to-day.

From the time of the Renaissance the rigidity of feudal class distinctions began to break down.

But the process of decline was very gradual. How strong those distinctions remained in the eighteenth century may be seen from the reply the Countess of Huntingdon received from the Duchess of Buckingham, when the former wrote on behalf of her Methodist protégés:

‘I thank your Ladyship for the information concerning the Methodist preachers; their doctrines are most repulsive and strongly tinged with impertinence and disrespect towards their superiors, in perpetually endeavouring to level all ranks and do away with all distinctions. It is monstrous to be told you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on the earth. This is highly offensive and insulting, and I cannot but wonder that your Ladyship should relish any sentiments so much at variance with high rank and good breeding.’

Such views sound comic to-day. But we are becoming aware of an equally unpleasant fact, that the pre-eminence of Blood has been supplanted by the pre-eminence of Wealth. Undiluted capitalism, as may be seen in America, produces Plutocracy just as surely as feudalism produced Aristocracy.

Before this unwelcome discovery was made, Rousseau had preached the Equality of Man. The idea took strong root in France. According to de Tocqueville, the real cause of the Revolution was the demand for Equality, not for Liberty; hatred of privilege, not desire for self-government. But it is noticeable that among the particular Rights enumerated in the Declaration there is no mention of Equality—‘the natural rights of man are liberty, property, security and resistance to oppression.’ The authors of the Revolution were by no

means communists; they were shopkeepers and peasants who aimed at nothing but security of ownership. They achieved their aim, with the result that there is a far greater measure of economic equality in France than there is in Britain. *La carrière ouverte aux talents* was the part of the equalitarian creed achieved by the abolition of privilege. The careers of Napoleon and his marshals prove how real was the existence of Equality in this sense.¹ Furthermore the Code Napoléon, adopted in Belgium and Switzerland as well as in France, enforced Equality by interfering with bequests—inherited wealth had to be split up among all the children in a family and not passed on intact to the eldest child alone. Even so, Equality exists in a very limited degree. Professor Tawney explains why this is so: 'The idea was formulated as a lever to overthrow legal inequality and juristic privilege, and from its infancy it has been presented in negative rather than positive terms. It has been interpreted rather as freedom of restraints than as the possession of powers.'

The result of the application of the Utilitarian creed of freedom from restraints in economic affairs has been an increase rather than a decrease of inequality. In practice the creed amounts to nothing more than 'devil take the hindmost.' In the early stages of Capitalism equality of opportunity often resulted in rapid changes in the social ladder. But money breeds money, and when Capitalism is more developed there is little chance for an inventor like Arkwright to rise from the bottom to the top. The exponents of *laissez-faire* urged the abolition of privilege and of all State interference. Every man must be left

¹ In Napoleon's army it was said that every private carried a field-marshal's bâton in his knapsack.

free to make as much money as he can. What they could not foresee was that, as wealth increased and was inherited, the equality of opportunity to make it steadily decreased. The Manchester School economist¹ was like a referee in a 100 yards' race who announces that everyone is free to run for the prize, but omits to make sure that everyone starts on the line.

As the century ran its course the more intelligent radicals saw that something was wrong about their favourite theories of Freedom of Contract and the Harmony of Interests. Cobden, for example, admitted that State interference was justified to protect working women and children; he realized that such people were not free to look after their own interests. But he strongly objected to Trade Unions. He regarded them as combinations which limited the freedom of the employer, not as instruments which secured equality of bargaining power. Even more significant is the change in the opinions of J. S. Mill. He began as an ardent Benthamite; he ended on the verge of Socialism. In his *Autobiography*, written towards the end of his life, he states his hopes that there would be in the future a more just division of the produce of labour and greater limitations on the inheritance of wealth. 'The social problem of the future we considered to be how to unite the greatest liberty of action with a common ownership in the raw materials of the globe and an equal participation in the benefits of combined labour.'

If we look back on the development of Liberalism from an economic point of view we see that political liberty was won by the middle classes in the first place for themselves. 'As a doctrine,' says Professor Laski, 'it was, effectively, a by-product of the effort of the

¹ Adam Smith, Ricardo, etc.

middle classes to win its place in the sun.' Hence 'the liberty of liberalism is set in the context of property.' The circumstances by which they sought to secure their property set limits to the theory of Natural Rights. We have seen how Locke made the preservation of property the fundamental aim of his State; other liberties followed because they were connected with this aim or, at least, did not interfere with it. Religious liberty and even political liberty might be granted to all, but not equality of property.

This fact comes out clearly in the great crises in which Democracy was born in England and in France. Both in 1647 and in 1789 a political revolution nearly developed into a social revolution. At the former date the Levellers in the Army claimed social as well as political equality; at the latter Babeuf and his fellow-communists made the same claim. In the Army debates held at Putney in 1647 and recorded in the Clarke Papers, Colonel Rainborough said: 'Really, sir, I think the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live as the richest he. And therefore truly I think, sir, it is clear that every man that is to live under a government ought first by his own consent to put himself under that government.' 'According to this maxim,' agreed a certain Mr. Wildman, 'there is never a person in England but ought to have a voice in elections.' As we saw in the last chapter, Colonel Ireton objected to these extremist views. In his opinion universal manhood suffrage did not do justice to those who had a stake in the country; property-owners alone should be allowed to vote.

Ireton's views prevailed. We find them again in Locke's thesis. 'Government by the consent and with the good will of the governed,' but not the direct

participation of all in the exercise of the power to make laws. Rousseau's demand for equality runs counter to this; but he was forced to admit that pure direct Democracy was impossible in the modern state, and so he reluctantly confesses that true Democracy is a form of government for gods, not men.

All these theorists admit that the People is sovereign; but they disagree on what they mean by 'the People.' Should *all* the people have equal voting powers? Yes, says Rousseau. No, says Locke, only the propertied members. Burke, the founder of modern Conservatism, agreed with Locke. 'The People is the natural control of authority; but to control and to exercise are not the same thing.' On this basis he developed his theory of Representation. In the interests of the whole society, wise men should govern fools. Government should be carried on by gentlemen elected by property-owners, because those who have a stake in the country have a greater responsibility than those who have none. Representatives elected in this manner will be more efficient because they are more practised in the art of government than the demagogues that might otherwise get themselves into power. Burke expects a high degree of public spirit and sympathy on the part of his representatives. He should regard himself as a trustee of the welfare of the whole nation, not as a mere spokesman of sectional interests. 'You choose a member indeed,' he told the electors of Bristol, 'but when you have chosen him, he is not a member of Bristol, but he is a member of *parliament*.'¹

Who were the electors? In his view, the upper and middle classes, 'the natural representatives of the

¹ A Member of Parliament is a representative; a delegate to a Trades' Union Congress is a spokesman.

human race,' as Macaulay called them fifty years later. Radical as were the Whigs of the Reform era, they were no more willing to enfranchise the whole population than was Burke. When they talked about the Sovereign People they meant what Locke and Burke meant—'the middle classes, the wealth and intelligence of the country, the glory of the British name' (Brougham). This was the People as understood by the Act of 1832. No wonder the Chartists were enraged. No wonder they demanded real political equality and universal manhood suffrage, as their predecessors, the Levellers, had demanded it. 'Don't be deceived by the middle classes again,' shouted a Leicester Chartist, 'you helped them to get their votes. But where are the fine promises they made you? . . . Don't listen to their cant and humbug. Stick to your Charter. You are slaves without your votes.'

We are now in a better position to understand the relation between Liberty and Equality. In the economic sphere they remain irreconcilable. In the political sphere the one was achieved by the logic of the arguments advanced on behalf of the other. But to talk about political without economic equality is to mistake the shadow for the substance. A Briton may wave his ballot paper in the air to prove that he is free; but if he is a wage-slave it will profit him little as long as his party remains in the minority. Plato saw that great economic inequalities are incompatible with the unity of the community. Hence, argues Professor Laski, the leading protagonist of this view,

'there cannot be democratic government without equality; and without democratic government there cannot be freedom. For the real meaning of democratic government is the equal weighing of individual

claims to happiness by social institutions. A society built upon economic inequality cannot attempt that sort of measure. Consciously or unconsciously, it starts from the assumption that there is a greater right in some claims than in others. It cannot be said that response to claims is made in terms of justice.'

Liberalism has heretofore been a negative rather than a positive movement. It has aimed at the removal of hindrances to freedom. Can it create greater freedom by furthering the cause of Equality? In some measure it has done this by emancipating the slaves, perhaps the greatest triumph of the equalitarian creed. But can it make the man whose ancestors were slaves the real equal of the man who remains in some sense the master? Is this even desirable? Socialism, that is to say the policy of economic equality, assumes that it is desirable and can be done. In the next chapter we shall see how the socialist argues that industrial democracy can develop out of political democracy.

* * * * *

Though Economic Equality has not yet been achieved, Civil Equality, in the sense of equality before the law, rests on secure foundations in democratic countries. Nearly all the triumphs of our Western civilization can be traced back to the liberty of the individual which this equality protects. In the absence of it Galileo's genius was stultified, Hus was burned and Voltaire was forced to live most of his life in exile, as Einstein does to-day.

How is this freedom secured by Civil Equality? By the admission of the right of every man to stand his trial on equal terms in the common Courts of the realm; by the abolition of prerogative or irresponsible

courts like the Star Chamber, which, because they were the instruments of despotism, rode roughshod over the liberties of the subject; and by the protection of the individual against arbitrary imprisonment. In France every man is entitled to open trial in the Courts, but the plaintiff and defendant do not always meet on equal terms. Because of the existence of what is known as *Droit Administratif* certain persons, soldiers or officials, are in a privileged position. This distinction is unknown to English law. A soldier who kills a man, even though it is in the execution of his duty, is as liable to be found guilty of murder as if he had been a civilian.

The most important defence of civil liberty is the protection against arbitrary arrest afforded by the Habeas Corpus Acts of 1679 and 1816. A prisoner who regards himself as unlawfully arrested can apply for a writ of Habeas Corpus. Dicey defines such a writ as 'an order calling upon a person by whom a prisoner is alleged to be kept in confinement to bring such prisoner—to "have his body," whence the name *habeas corpus*—before the Court to let the Court know on what ground the prisoner is confined, and thus to give the Court the opportunity of dealing with the prisoner as the law may require.' As in English law every man is regarded as innocent until he is proved guilty, the prisoner must be found guilty of breaking some particular law, or he must be set at liberty. What happens in the absence of such Acts may be seen in Authoritarian states. In such countries a man may be whisked off in the middle of the night to a prison or a concentration camp, to be kept in 'protective custody' until the government, not the Courts of Law, decide whether he may be set at liberty again.

The ways in which English law secures the liberty of

the subject may appear clumsy and antiquated, but in practice they are swift and sure. Our constitution does not guarantee individual freedom as many Continental constitutions do. That is partly because we have no 'written' constitution, only a series of precedents.¹ The nearest expression to such a guarantee occurs in the thirty-ninth article of Magna Carta, which is repeated in the Petition of Right: '*Nullus liber homo capiatur, vel imprisonetur... nisi per legale iudicium parium suorum vel per legem terrae.*' These enactments (if such they can be called), comments Dicey, 'are rather records of the existence of a right than statutes which confer it. The expression "guaranteed",' he continues with reference to the use of that word in the Belgian constitution, 'is extremely significant; it suggests the notion that personal liberty is a special privilege insured to Belgians by some power above the ordinary law of the land. This is an idea utterly alien to English modes of thought, since with us freedom of person is not a special privilege but the outcome of the ordinary law of the land enforced by the Courts.'

It is in such a curious, negative, piecemeal fashion that Englishmen have secured Liberty and Equality in everything but their economic activities. It was truly said that Freedom slowly broadens down from precedent to precedent. Toleration, Self-Government, No Taxation without Representation, Freedom from Arbitrary Arrest—such are the strands with which Democracy is woven. By degrees these rights have been extended to the whole population: first to the property-owners, then to dissenters, then to the middle class, the

¹ France, U.S.A., Belgium, etc., have 'written' constitutions; but Great Britain has no single Constitutional Code to which appeal can be made.

town labourer, the agricultural labourer, the Roman Catholic and the Jew; last of all, women have been emancipated.

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The story how women won political liberty and equality of status before the law, is not as well known as it deserves to be. It is the last episode in our study of the meaning of Democracy because women were the last members of the community to win those prizes. In 1928 there were thirteen and a half million males on the electoral roll of this country and no fewer than fifteen million females. Numerically considered, their enfranchisement is of more importance than the male suffrage movement of which so much is made in the history books. Moreover, it is of peculiar interest to the historian of ideas because it is an outstanding example of the truth that an idea, however reasonable, does not become of practical importance till social conditions admit of its adoption.

Thirty years ago women were enfranchised only in new countries such as New Zealand, South Africa and the United States. The position of women in these states had always been more free than that of their sisters in older countries, chiefly because of the part they had played as wives of the early settlers. To-day women are admitted to equal civil and political rights in most European countries; but they are still debarred from voting in France, Belgium and Portugal; and under the new regime in Germany a reaction has set in in accordance with Hitler's view that they should confine themselves to the three K's—*Kirche, Kinder, Küche*. Even in Britain, to which we shall confine ourselves in this brief survey, admission to politics and to the professions has been extraordinarily recent.

The position of women in Europe has always been higher than in other continents. Never, even in Victorian times, did it deteriorate to the 'purdah' level of India. This was partly due to the romantic theories of love first elaborated in the code of chivalry by the twelfth-century troubadours, and then developed by the disciples of Petrarch in the Renaissance period. But while these poets of Platonic Love, and still more those of the Romantic period, set woman on a pedestal the man in the street (when he was not in love) had not the least desire to regard her as his equal. Milton defines the typical attitude which prevailed till recent times when he speaks of Adam and Eve:

'He for God only, she for God in him.'

Consider the advice Lord Halifax gave to his daughter in 1688: 'You must first lay it down for a foundation in general that there is *Inequality* in the *Sexes*, and that for the better Economy of the World, the *Men*, who were to be the Lawgivers, had the larger share of *Reason* bestowed upon them.'

The result was that women lived in subjection to their lords. Such was the official view—and there was always the ducking-stool for scolds. Law and Religion kept them in subservience, and still do in many countries. Married women could not sue or be sued; they had no rights whatever over their children or their property. Until the Infants' Custody Act of 1839 a man could forbid his children to see his wife on any pretext. Until the Women's Property Act of 1882 he could do whatever he liked with her dowry or her wages. Nor could a woman obtain a divorce for the same reason as her husband before the year 1923.

The Industrial Revolution made the position of women far worse than it had been before. In the old days of Domestic Industry women had plenty of responsibility in dairy work, spinning, lace-making and the like. They were of some importance in the home, quite apart from their position as wives and mothers. The introduction of machinery changed all that. The men tended the spinning-machines and the women picked up the scraps on the floor of the factory. Whatever independence their work had given them vanished when they submitted to the lash of the overseer in the factory, or the strong arm of the husband in the home.

The position of the middle-class woman was nearly as bad. When her work was taken away from her as undignified and unnecessary she was condemned to lead the existence of a mere doll, to be educated in needlework and piano-playing to live a life of house-visiting, tea-table gossip and child-bearing. As the century progressed matters got worse. In the ideal Victorian female there was considerably more Sensibility than Sense. 'Study first Propriety' was the rule. The curious thing is that men demanded this role. Consciously or not, woman became a peg for her husband's vanity, a symbol of his prosperity. The better dressed your wife was, the grander your house, the smarter your equipage, the more dignified your status.

Such are the causes for the astonishing fact that women were, on the whole, less independent under Victoria than under George I. But even in the eighteenth century there were signs that women could vindicate their rights as human beings. Quaker and Methodist women preachers had begun to appear.

Johnson's remark was typical of the male attitude to such phenomena: 'Sir, a woman's preaching is like a dog walking on his hinder legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all.' Yet already in the Quaker Elizabeth Fry we have a person as efficient and as independent as Florence Nightingale.

At the same time Frenchwomen of the upper classes had secured a predominating position in society. Through their *salons* they ruled opinion. In England these free spirits had their equivalents in Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Thrale and the like. With them appeared a galaxy of female novelists. Anyone who reads of the trepidations with which Fanny Burney published the first feminine best seller, *Evelina*, in 1778, will appreciate how hostile opinion was to the idea of a lady novelist, until one appeared who could beat the men at their own game. Neither Miss Burney nor Miss Austen were feminists, nor was their social influence of great importance. The Brontës had to face just such prejudices as they had faced. But Charlotte Brontë, and still more Harriet Martineau and George Eliot, put feminism to the fore and by their success gradually wore down public hostility.

In politics the foundation of the women's movement was laid by Shelley's mother-in-law, Mary Wollstonecraft, in her *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792). Her claims for the freedom of women were extreme and enthusiastic. 'She considered herself,' said her husband, the anarchist philosopher Godwin, 'as standing forth in defence of one-half of the human species, labouring under a yoke which through all the records of time had degraded them from the station of rational beings and almost sunk them to the level of brutes.' Her programme includes demands for a free and equal status

in law, politics, work, education and morality. No wonder she was fearful of the reception such ideas might have: 'I may excite laughter by dropping a hint, but I really think that women ought to have representatives, instead of being arbitrarily governed, without having any direct share allowed them in the deliberations of Government.'

It was the wrong time to drop such 'hints.' Upper-class opinion regarded the Declaration of the Rights of Man as dangerous and absurd; how much more ridiculous were the Rights of Women!

The book died still-born. Even Mill's more moderate plea in his *Representative Government* (1861) was without effect. But already a bigger movement was afoot. In the 'sixties women—and men—in London and Manchester began to found societies for the enfranchisement of women. One of these founders was a radical lawyer named Pankhurst, who devoted his life to the cause of Votes for Women. After his death his widow and her two daughters, Christabel and Sylvia, carried the struggle to a victorious conclusion. In 1903, Mrs. Pankhurst formed the Women's Social and Political Union. When the Liberals took office in 1906 she decided to press the cause of women by new methods. The Suffragettes, as they called themselves, became militant. Their methods soon became notorious. They besieged the Houses of Parliament; they chained themselves to railings; they assaulted Ministers and made meetings hideous by their heckling; they interrupted, screamed, paraded and threw stones. One after another they were packed off to Holloway Gaol where Dame Ethyl Smyth, thrusting her arms through the bars of her cell, conducted with a toothbrush the anthem she had composed for them. They took to

hunger-striking, and the Government replied with forcible feeding.

So far the movement had been confined to a small but vocal band of enthusiasts. Their fervour soon drew women of every type into their ranks, and they succeeded in making Votes for Women the question of the hour. In 1910 the Liberals tried to come to terms with them with a Conciliation Bill. It was thrown out by the Lords and terrorism began anew. The campaign was intensified: some took to arson and burned down castles and country-houses; others slashed pictures in the picture-galleries, or burned letters in pillar-boxes; one martyred herself by throwing herself in front of the King's horse at the Derby. As forcible feeding revolted the average Englishman, the Government passed the Cat-and-Mouse Act by which hunger-strikers were set at liberty until they were strong enough to serve the rest of their sentences. This cruel measure was a political error of the worst sort: it drove many who had been alienated by the outrages of the terrorists into sympathy with the movement.

At that moment the War broke out. Mrs. Pankhurst immediately called a truce and devoted herself to the cause of recruiting. As men were called to the Front, women took their places, on the land, in the factories, driving lorries, making munitions. Soon it became obvious that many of the jobs which men, with their usual self-esteem, had regarded as peculiarly masculine could be done just as well by women. To such an extent did women prove their equality in actual practice that their enfranchisement was a foregone conclusion before the end of the War. Social conditions at last permitted the adoption of Mary Wollstonecraft's ideas.

The Act of 1918 enfranchised the eight and a half million women householders who were over thirty years of age; it also permitted them to become eligible for election to Parliament. In 1928 the victory of the Cause was completed with surprisingly little fuss with the Flapper Vote Act. Political democracy became complete when all adults, male and female, were given equality of voting power. That same year Mrs. Pankhurst died and a statue was erected to her behind the House of Lords, near the very spot where she had fought so long for the emancipation of women.

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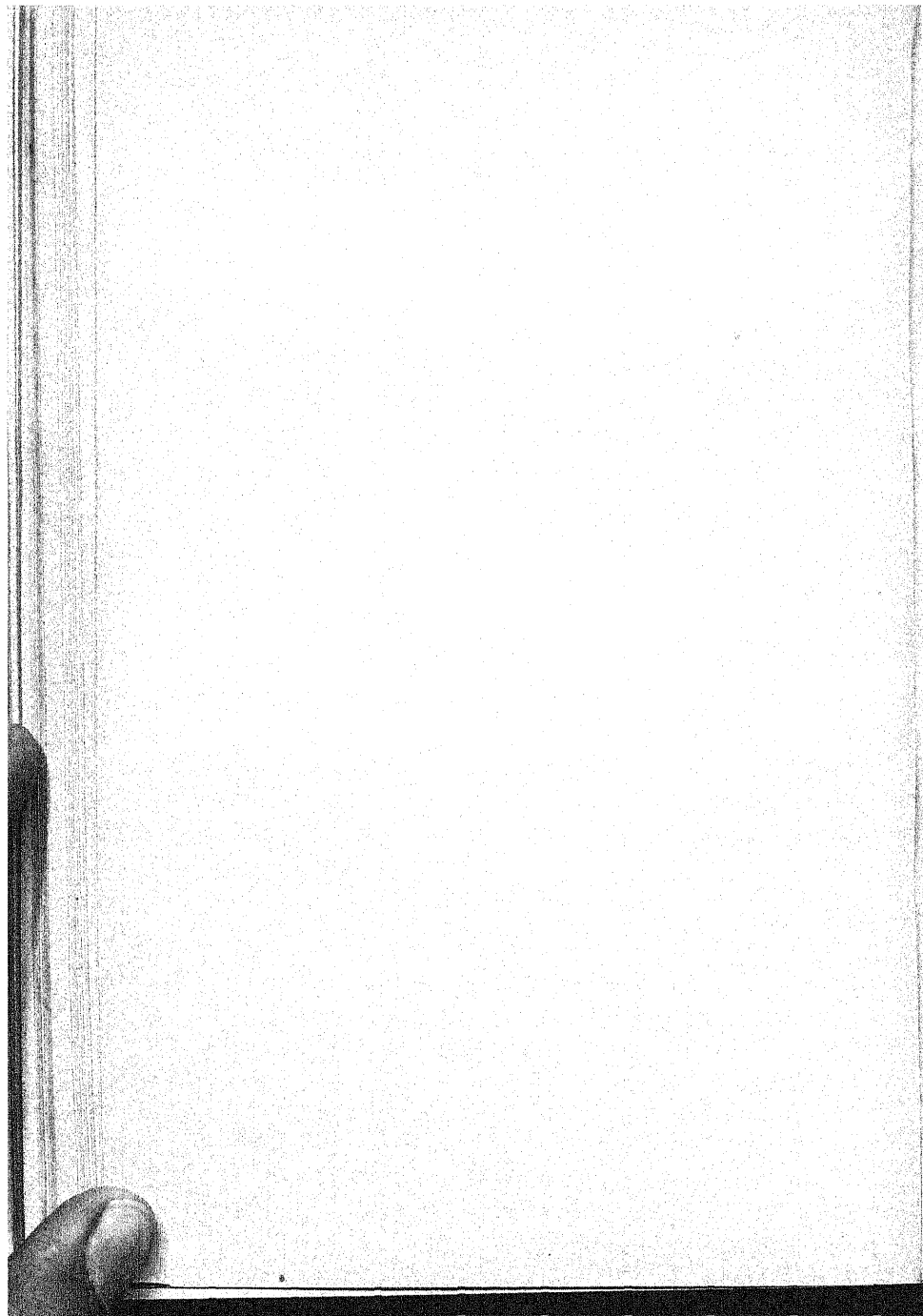
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PART III
NEW GOSPELS



I

SOCIALISM

OUR subject is not a discussion of disembodied metaphysics, but an inquiry into the meaning of those political ideas which are rooted in the circumstances of our time. It is the change between the conditions under which liberal democracy began to develop in the last century and those prevailing to-day which is responsible for the growth of the new gospels to be considered in this part. In socialist language, the economic situation of the present time is due to the decay of Capitalism, a system which may be defined as that under which the acquisition of private property by individuals is encouraged. Whether Capitalism is really in its death throes, or whether it is merely changing its form, we cannot decide here; but this transformation has certainly created the new problems which the new gospels pretend to solve.

In Socialism and Communism the need for greater equality in the economic organization is stressed; they aim at creating an economic as well as a political democracy. Fascism, turning its back on Liberty and Equality alike, aims at controlling the life of society in the interests of the State. Thus Fascism, not Socialism, is a rival of Democracy; and Communism, in spite of its avowals, must also be considered a rival at present. The most simple (and therefore the least satisfactory) classification of contemporary political creeds is that which divides men into the sheep and the goats; to use

the modern jargon, supporters of the Right or of the Left. These terms are borrowed from the semi-circular seating arrangements of Continental legislatures. On the right sit Fascists and Authoritarians; in the centre, Capitalists, Conservatives and Liberals of the nineteenth-century pattern; on the left, ranging from palest pink to deepest red, sit the Socialists, Radicals and Communists.

Such party labels are mere abstractions. Canute was the first uncompromising conservative, and we know what happened to him. The ideal capitalist is the pirate who considers himself free to rob anyone in order to fill his own pockets. The ideal communist is the bee or the ant. Yet these are the creeds which have turned Spain into a bloodstained battlefield. If the civil war which results from the conflict of such 'ideologies' is to be avoided it would be as well to remember Macaulay's advice: 'Reform if you would preserve.'

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Before it is possible to understand the meaning of Socialism it is necessary to see how its rival, Capitalism, has developed in recent times. We must perforce limit ourselves in this chapter to Great Britain, but what has occurred here has also occurred in other countries.

* In the last chapter we saw some of the difficulties created by the adoption of the doctrine of *laissez-faire*. About the middle of the last century that creed had an immense prestige. By means of it the world swept forward on a rising tide of prosperity; and from an intellectual point of view the popular notion of the Survival of the Fittest seemed to make competition an unquestionable law of nature. But as the century drew towards its close the fallacies of the creed became

obvious. The freedom of choice upon which the liberal argument rested was denied by the fact that four-fifths of the population worked on terms dictated by one-fifth. It became clear, too, that everyone was not equally far-sighted in knowing what he or she wanted. Nor, finally, did it appear that there was any truth in the dogma of Harmony of Interests. It was not only the socialist who failed to be convinced that the business-man was serving the interest of the community when he was busily filling his own pockets. To explode the popular Darwinian argument of the Survival of the Fittest, Kropotkin pointed to an equally valid law of nature—Mutual Aid.¹ Others pointed out that in the Middle Ages a standard of social justice existed in the insistence on a Fair Price. But, according to the Manchester School economist, there can be no such thing as a *fair* price; prices are regulated by economic, not moral, laws. Furthermore, freedom of enterprise degenerated into Licence to Rob. If everyone is allowed 'to conduct his own business in his own way' the law of the jungle comes into operation once more.

Only in a few instances, such as the early cotton-mills or coal-mines, or in the building of the United States rail-roads, did this state of affairs really exist. The conscience of society was never entirely extinct. Even in industry itself it soon became apparent that cut-throat competition defeated its own ends. Freedom of Enterprise only exists in the earliest stages of Capitalism. Before long it is smothered by trustification. Bigger organizations crush the smaller out of existence, just as the chain-store ousts the village shopkeepers. To-day the business-man seldom works with only his own capital: he has become a director working with other

¹ See *Mutual Aid, a Factor in Evolution*. 1902.

people's capital, or an agent of a few great financiers who control the credit of the country. Just after the War the German industrialist Rathenau said that the economic system of Europe was in the hands of three hundred men. In 1890 there were one hundred and four Joint Stock Banks in England; in 1924 there were eighteen, and 84 per cent of their aggregate deposit was in the hands of the Big Five. Thus the development of Capitalism itself is in the direction of limiting the freedom of the individual business-man.

Capitalist technique increased the wealth of the world to an enormous extent. In this country, where industrialism developed first, it has been estimated that real wages rose at least fourfold during the last century. In this stage of expansion Capitalism could afford to pay high wages and satisfy the needs of the poor out of the pockets of the rich. But as other countries began in like manner to adopt large-scale productive methods world markets became flooded with goods. It looked as if production was reaching saturation point; soon all would be sellers and no one a buyer. A phase of contraction began, and wages, not profits, were the first to suffer. Nevertheless between 1911 and 1930 the average income per head rose from £189 to £230.

This increase was due to the prolonged boom after the War. It suggested that Capitalism was not in such a bad way as the socialist thought. But once more the aspect changed in accordance with the working of the Trade Cycle, i.e. the alternating periods of boom and slump which are characteristic of modern Capitalism. According to the socialist these cycles are bound to become more frequent and more intense. The great slump of 1929, from which the world is just beginning to recover, forced many who had never busied them-

selves with such matters before to inquire into the causes of this remarkable state of affairs. Unfortunately no two economists could be found to agree on an answer; only a cruel paradox continued to stare everyone in the face: the existence of poverty in the midst of plenty.

Socialists prophesied this situation many years ago: 'General prosperity in a country under a capitalist régime depends not on the amount of wealth within the country, but on its ability to dispose of its surplus wealth. Hence, when all countries are fully capitalized and there are no fields for exploitation, no country will be able to dispose of its surplus wealth and the Capitalist system will crack. Capitalism therefore contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction.' The only way of escape, says the socialist, is to replace the profit-making motive in industry with the motive of service. Things are valuable in use, not merely in exchange, as the capitalist thinks. Wheat must be distributed, not where it will fetch the highest price, but where it is most wanted; and the wealth of the State must be so redistributed that even the poorest can afford to buy it. We must make it impossible for wheat to lie rotting in the elevators while men are starving in the streets.

Socialism differs from Communism in that it is a tendency, not a body of dogmas. There is no authoritative statement of its ideals upon which all are agreed, and it is possible for many who do not call themselves socialists to sympathize with some of its principles. As a political programme it may be defined as a policy advocating the ownership and control of the means of production, e.g. land, coal, power, banks, by the community, to be administered in the interests of the whole, not of the part. It seeks to balance a rigid discipline in what affects the happiness of all with the broadest

possible freedom in what affects only the individual himself. It admits Mill's distinction between self and other-regarding actions, but it claims that Mill misstated the problem by underestimating the part played by economics. Socialism aims at providing first of all the conditions under which Liberty can exist. This is as much as to say that creation of Equality is its aim, because it holds that Liberty is not worth having without the security Equality provides. From the economic point of view the socialist argues that industry will be more efficient when it is socialized, and from the moral point of view he claims that Socialism will ensure justice. Socialism, in short, proposes to complete rather than oppose the liberal-democratic creed. It will use the victories already won in a parliamentary democracy to extend democratic principles to industry. In the name of Liberty the machinery of government has been altered; will it not be possible to alter the economic organization of society in the name of Equality?

Definitions of Socialism are legion. They all differ on the meaning attached to the word 'equality.' Bernard Shaw has always advocated Equality of Income. 'Socialism means equality of income and nothing else,' he tells the Intelligent Woman. A more orthodox description of the socialist ideal is provided by G. D. H. Cole:

'Socialism means four closely connected things—a human fellowship which denies and expels distinctions of class, a social system in which no one is so much richer or poorer than his neighbours as to be unable to mix with them on equal terms, the common ownership and use of all the vital instruments of production, and an obligation upon all citizens to serve one another according to their capacities.'

Socialism indicts Capitalism on three counts: that it creates inequality of wealth; that it is inefficient in its working; that it is callous to the claims of justice, beauty and happiness.

Capitalism has certainly created inequality of wealth. A few figures will show the extent to which it exists in this country. Soon after the War it was estimated that two-thirds of the wealth of the country was in the hands of 1 per cent of the whole population. In 1931, 40 per cent of the net national income was paid out in wages to about 76 per cent of the population; 24 per cent was paid out in salaries to 14 per cent, and 36 per cent was paid out in rent and profits to 10 per cent.¹

This allocation of income divides the population into innumerable groups or classes. The simple Marxian analysis of society into the Haves and the Have-nots, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat,² bears no relation to the actual social stratification of wage earners, salaried workers, employers, farmers, professional and independent workers. Society is in reality a complex of minutely subdivided classes and the distribution of wealth is manifestly unequal.

Inequality of wealth creates inequality of opportunity. The best do not always fill the most suitable posts. These inequalities of advantage are seen most clearly in our educational system, by which the children of richer parents have opportunities denied to those of poorer parentage and thus start life with an initial advantage. Something has been done to remedy this by granting more facilities for secondary and adult education. But the inequality which remains is not

¹ See Carr Saunders, *Social Structure of England and Wales*, 1927. And Colin Clark, *The National Income*, 1931.

² This word originally meant 'manual worker.' It can now be used to include any of your friends.

merely unjust but dangerous to the stability of the State, as other nations have long since admitted. Sixty years ago Matthew Arnold wrote: 'The one insuperable objection to inequality is the same as the one insuperable objection to absolutism: namely, that inequality, like absolutism, thwarts a vital instinct and being thus against nature, is against humanization. On the one side inequality harms by pampering; on the other by vulgarizing and depressing. A system founded on it is against nature, and in the long run breaks down.'

The demand for Equality is the basis of Socialism. But it also attacks Capitalism as inefficient, in that it no longer guarantees either security of income or of tenure. A bankruptcy in the Argentine deprives an old lady in Cheltenham of her property. A slump like that of 1929 may throw even members of the managerial class out of employment. Capitalism is essentially planless; it is haphazard in organization and mere guesswork in finance. Samuel Smiles's precepts of Self Help are farcical in a world in which prices, credits, production and demand are dictated to the individual business-man by forces far beyond his control. The Captains of Industry themselves are but flies upon the enormous wheel of the Trade Cycle. The truth of this is largely admitted by modern Capitalism; hence the increasing use of quotas, scales, rationalization and other methods to prevent over-production or suicidal competition. The socialist denies that it will ever be possible to plan Capitalism without having recourse to State interference; left to itself, Capitalism is bound to result in war within and without the State.

Not merely is Capitalism accused of being unjust in its distribution of rewards for work; not merely does it fail to give that security which is the distinguishing

mark of an efficient economic system; but it is callous in its disregard for human happiness. It produces ugly articles under ugly conditions. A sudden unprecedented decline in the arts coincided with its introduction. The division of labour required by mechanization stifles the instincts of the craftsman to take a pride in his work. When a man has nothing to do but turn a handle as the needle points in a certain direction he cannot be expected to take an interest in what he produces. And when he is condemned to live in a slum for his pains, or to stand at a street corner for weeks on end because his labour is not needed, no wonder he feels dissatisfied. Under the conditions of modern industry the workman ceases to be a human being; he becomes a mere cog in the machine. It is this danger of creating a society in which 'Wealth accumulates and men decay' that made great Victorians like Ruskin and Morris denounce Capitalism with a vigour which has never been surpassed.

It is easy enough to indict the present system. In the words of a brilliant economist, Capitalism is 'absolutely irreligious, without internal union, without much public spirit, often, though not always, mere congeries of possessors and pursuers.' What proportion of these ills is due to the system and what to human nature itself? The socialist answers that the system brings out the worst in human nature. It condones, even glorifies, avarice. Without promising Utopia, he thinks that things will be better if the economic system is changed. Socialism differs from Communism in that it believes that the necessary reforms can be made within the structure of parliamentary democracy without resorting to revolution. Of course the Labour Party's is not the only programme of reform. Nowadays all political

parties are agreed on some form of State interference to palliate the manifest inequalities created by a Capitalism untempered by social responsibility. But the Labour Party, or Social-Democrats (as they are called abroad), go farther than this. By the use of constitutional weapons they propose to cut the core out of Capitalism by prohibiting profit-making in the basic industries or services.

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To see how the socialist programme developed to this point it is necessary to go back to the time when liberals were prophesying the advent of a golden age. Those hopes were dissipated in the Hungry 'Forties, and out of the disillusion Chartism (1837-49) was born. Chartism was a heterogeneous collection of reformist theories of all complexions. In its early days it was inspired by Robert Owen, who is usually called the first socialist. He deserves the title, though his constructive ideas were too utopian to bear much resemblance to modern Socialism. He was an amiable, eccentric idealist who made a fortune as a mill-owner and then threw in his lot with the working class. He saw where Capitalism was heading and what an anti-social doctrine it was. 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' He called upon the State to intervene to check the excesses of exploitation, but the State refused and he lost faith in this method of reform. He advised the workers to look after their own interests by forming Co-operative Societies and Trade Unions. In 1827 one of his disciples invented the term 'Socialism' when he wrote of the possibility of owning capital not individually, but as 'communionists or socialists.' Owen's ideas became far too visionary and even his societies had to be

reformed. The modern Co-operative Movement began with the experiment of the Rochdale pioneers in 1844, and Trade Unions had no firm footing in the State until thirty years later.

Chartism is not the ancestor of British Socialism. It became a political movement preaching class warfare. The working class were to seize political power by force, if necessary, and to this end one of their members invented the technique of the General Strike. The movement was largely responsible for the class-war bias of Marxian Socialism; but British Socialism took another turn. Backed by organizations like the Trade Unions, it aimed first of all at extorting concessions from the employers by methods of collective bargaining. Amelioration was the aim, not revolution. Because of this the Unions were able to ally, first with the Conservative Party and later with the Liberals. In 1893 the Independent Labour Party was formed under the leadership of Keir Hardie and Ramsay MacDonald, who declared: 'The watchword of Socialism is not class-consciousness, but community-consciousness.' In 1900 the Parliamentary Labour Party was formed by the members of the various working-class bodies and Socialism achieved its first important electoral triumph in 1906, when fifty-three Labour members were returned to Parliament.

The first steps in State interference on behalf of the working classes, 'Collectivism' as it is sometimes called, was not the work of socialists but of Tory humanitarians. Lord Shaftesbury was the first practical socialist. The turning point between the rise and decline of Economic Liberalism are the debates on the Ten Hours' Bill in 1847. As Dicey says, 'The factory movement introduced socialistic enactments into the law of England

and gave prestige and authority to the ideas of collectivism.' As Capitalism developed, dissatisfaction became more general and collectivist legislation more frequent. Three great novels show the gradual change in public opinion: Disraeli's *Sybil, or the Two Nations* (the rich and the poor); Kingsley's *Alton Locke* (the author was one of the group called the Christian Socialists); and Dickens' *Hard Times* (1854), which Macaulay designated as 'sullen Socialism.' A little later political theory under the influence of T. H. Green began to move away from the individualistic outlook of Bentham towards a more community-conscious point of view. It was to be no longer a matter of Man versus the State, but Man as an integral part of the State. Hence State interference ceased to be regarded as the evil Adam Smith thought it was; it was seen, rather, as a means of distributing justice to each member of the social organism.

Strengthened by these theories Collectivism made great strides after 1870. There came into existence what was called the Social Service State, something much more positive in its function than was the old State of liberal thinkers, which was merely to hold the ring for a society of competitors. In the first place there was an extension of the protective functions of the State. Self-help gave place to State-help in measures of insurance, pensions, poor relief, etc. Freedom of enterprise was greatly limited by Factory Acts and the legalization of Collective Bargaining. Measures were also passed to equalize opportunities. For example, in 1870 the State took upon itself the responsibility of providing free education for the poor, and municipalities began to provide amenities such as libraries, baths, gas, water and tramways out of the rates. These

were socialistic measures in that they made provision for the poor out of the pockets of the rich. Hence Sir William Harcourt was able to horrify his audience a few years before the end of the century by declaring: 'We are all socialists nowadays.'

The most important step in this direction was the Unemployment Insurance Act of 1920. In 1848 Louis Blanc had preached the Right to Work in France. So much is admitted by the Dole system, because it implies that, if circumstances deny an individual this right, he must be maintained at the hands of the State. Society, not the individual, takes the responsibility for the existence of unemployment. How great has been the advance in this direction may be proved from the increase in the expenditure on the Social Services.¹

According to the socialist, expenditure on this scale cannot continue for long. If the policy of the Social Service State continues to be pursued the rich will be taxed out of existence: taxation will kill the goose which lays the golden eggs. Nor is it likely that the rich will persist in a policy which amounts to suicide. More fundamental changes are needed. Capitalism may have done penance for its sins, and no one will deny the great advances made within the last thirty years; but the socialist argues that the time is bound to come when such advances cannot continue to be made within the existing economic structure. The policy

¹ The figures are in £1,000 and refer only to England and Wales:

Year	1850	1900	1923
Poor Relief	4,963	11,549	38,172
Education	153	14,008	74,985
Unemployment Insurance ..	—	—	10,701
Total Expenditure (including Pensions, etc.) ..	5,116	28,095	186,172

The total expenditure per head of population in Great Britain, including Scotland, works out as 19s. 2d. in 1900 and £8 16s. 0d. in 1934.

of the Social Service State is not the same thing as Socialism because it does not go to the root of the matter in attacking the profit-seeking motive itself.

The changes which Socialism proposes are based on what may be called anti-capitalist deductions from the economic theories of Ricardo (1817). In his definition of rent Ricardo showed what a great difference there is between income derived from the ownership of an acre in, say, Regent Street and an acre in the Outer Hebrides. If, for example, coal is found at the bottom of your orchard you may sit back and 'live by owning' without doing any work at all. The socialist agrees with St. Paul, 'If any will not work, neither let him eat,' and he therefore makes the deduction that land should be nationalized. Ricardo never made that deduction, because he was an orthodox capitalist; but the popular American writer, Henry George, in his *Progress and Poverty* (1879) advocated land nationalization, though he never became a socialist. The whole argument against individual ownership of land, or indeed of capital of any sort, was put by the French socialist Proudhon in 1840 in his famous question: 'What is Property? Theft.'¹

These arguments were adopted by the Fabian Society as the basis of modern British Socialism. The society was founded in 1884 and included among its members such people as Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Graham Wallas, Bernard Shaw, Lord Olivier, Annie Besant, and, for a short time, H. G. Wells. As the intellectual backbone of the Labour Party they inspired the growth of municipal socialism; hence the nick-

¹ Cf., Bernard Shaw: 'Anyone who does less than her share of work, and yet takes her full share of the wealth produced by work, is a thief and should be dealt with as any other sort of thief is dealt with.'

name 'gas and water socialism.' It was an eminently practical and respectable Socialism the Fabians preached. Socialism was to be introduced by Act of Parliament. The battlefield between the old and new economic systems was not to be in the streets but in committee rooms of national and local governing bodies. The 'Inevitability of Gradualness' was their watchword. This, they pointed out, was in accordance with British traditions which make use of existing institutions to develop new tendencies. It was possible, they thought, to put new wine into old bottles. Gradualism is no longer popular in advanced circles to-day; but the Fabians had the satisfaction of seeing many of their ideas adopted and they certainly worked out the technique of socialization.

What is notable about their programme is the part to be played by the State. A more sympathetic attitude towards the State prevails to-day than existed a century ago. This is partly due to the fact that Democracy exists in a greater degree than in the days when the State was the tool of the employers; partly, also, because of the increased beneficent activities of the State. Owen was disillusioned when he sought reform by means of the State; Benthamites regarded its activities with horror, and Marx called it the instrument of class power. But the Webbs, the outstanding political theorists among the Fabians, wish to make it the instrument of reform. By an extension of its control the anarchy of profit-makers will be gradually and peacefully transformed into a democracy of public servants.

At the same time there developed in France a reaction against this State Socialism. The movement called Syndicalism, with which is associated the name of Georges Sorel, has had a curious history. A *Syndicat*

is the French word for a trade union. Syndicalism aimed at constructing a producer's state in which industries governed themselves. Instead of a political state there was to be a co-ordinating body elected out of the *syndicats* called the *Confédération Générale du Travail*. This federalist state was to be instituted, if necessary, by violence. Although the C.G.T. still exists in France, it has nothing like the importance it had before the War. On the other hand it is one of the most important parties in the Spanish Left at the present moment and, most curious of paradoxes, one of its early members was a certain Benito Mussolini, who adopted many of its ideas in his Corporate State.

In America Syndicalism made little headway, but in England it proved a popular doctrine just after the War in the form of Guild Socialism. 'Just as, in democratic countries,' writes G. D. H. Cole, one of its exponents, 'the citizens elect representatives to settle how the country is to be governed and who are to be the governors, so in industry I want leadership to come up from below by way of democratic election, and not be imposed from above as it is both under Capitalism and under bureaucratic forms of public enterprise.' This is to be done by developing the Works Committee machinery to be found at present in most big factories and uniting it with existing Trade Unions. There are to be local, regional and national guilds, mostly producers' organizations, and also a consumers' guild. According to the Guild socialist this type of organization will avoid the dangers of bureaucracy; according to the State socialist it will be even more anarchic than Capitalism. The scheme is certainly not as popular as it was some years ago and the working class has taken singularly little interest in it. But

it provided an antidote to the centralizing tendencies of Fabian Socialism and because of its criticism modern Socialism is more decentralized in aim. The model for a nationalized industry is no longer a State department like the Post Office, but a public utility corporation like the B.B.C. or the London Transport Board. It is significant that many such bodies, the Electricity Board for example, have been created by Conservative governments. The truth of the maxim, 'Public supervision needs to be proportionate to public interests,' seems to be increasingly admitted by all parties.

The decentralizing tendencies of modern Socialism are reflected in the most authoritative statement of the form of society envisaged by socialists, the *Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain* constructed by the Webbs in 1920. Broadly speaking they demand a state which will be at the same time a political and an industrial democracy. To this end the first move will be the abolition of the House of Lords, because it is a hereditary body which does not adequately fulfil the functions of a Second Chamber. The office of King is retained, however, and the constitution continues to be bi-cameral in form.

'The whole body of citizens must have two channels—one through which they can express their will in the group of issues involved in the protection of the community and the individual against aggression, including the maintenance of personal liberty; and the other through which they can exercise their creative impulse towards such a use of the national resources as will provide for themselves a finer and fuller civilization.'

For this purpose there will be a Political Parliament controlling matters of Defence, Justice, and Foreign

Affairs; and a Social Parliament to deal with financial, industrial and educational affairs. Both will be elected separately and both will be supreme in their own spheres, though the latter controls the purse strings. Any deadlock between the two bodies would be resolved by dissolution.

The basic industries and services—land, mines, railways, banking and investment—will be nationalized in such a manner as to ensure public ownership with efficient direction. In the author's opinion workers' control in industry will prove inefficient. 'What has to be contrived is a social machinery that will ensure not only that the selection (of managers, etc.) will be rightly made, but also that all those concerned will have confidence that it is rightly made.' For this purpose there should be a public Appointments Board and also publication of all statistics relating to the industry to throw the 'searchlight of published knowledge' on its condition. Standing committees in Social Parliament will exercise general but remote control of each industry, which will be administered in every case by National Boards. Organizations like the Civil Service, the Trade Unions and the Co-operative Societies remain, but strikes will be less frequent when workers can see for themselves the financial situation of an industry. The Constitution will be adopted by degrees in accordance with the technique of Gradualism. 'We do not foresee any sudden and simultaneous termination of the Capitalist System. History does not describe any form of social structure being entirely and universally superseded. What is seen to occur, in one century and one country after another, is one or other form of organization becoming predominant, though not to the complete exclusion of other forms.'

This Constitution is obviously an attempt to allay the fears of those who see in Socialism only the advance of bureaucracy. The owners of the industries which it is proposed to nationalize will be compensated, just as the present National Government is buying out the owners of Coal Royalties. The new organization of industries as public corporations will make the term 'nationalization' in some sense a misnomer, for 'the only essential feature in socialization is that the industries and services, with the instruments of production which they require, should not be owned by individuals, and that industrial and social administration should not be organized for the purpose of obtaining private profit.' 'I believe,' says J. M. Keynes, who is by no means a socialist, 'that in many cases the ideal size for the unit of control and organization lies somewhere between the individual and the modern State. I suggest, therefore, that progress lies in the growth and the recognition of bodies which are semi-autonomous within their prescribed limitations, but are subject in the last resort to the sovereignty of the democracy expressed through Parliament.'

According to the Webbs taxation remains, firstly, to provide a sinking fund for compensation purposes, and secondly, to provide a part of the revenue. Profits made by State industries will of course contribute, but there will still be taxable incomes because the Webbs are no believers in rigid equality of income. Higher salaries will be attached to the more responsible posts. And through a distinction between personal¹ and private property men will be able to save and thus to pay taxes; they will even own a certain amount of property. Inheritance of wealth, however, is prohibited, and no

¹ Personal property includes such things as house, car, etc.

one will be able to 'live by owning.' For 'what socialists object to is the perversion of the institution of private property by the extension of the concept to things and rights which, in their judgment, are not fit objects of individual ownership.'

When industries are run by National Boards will not prices be higher than at present? Certainly when a trust monopolizes an industry this is often the case. But a trust is run for profit; public utility bodies are run as services. Prices, according to the socialist, may even become lower, in spite of the absence of competition. They distinguish between Cost Price, which includes the tribute paid by the manufacturer to the property owner in the form of Rent, and Real Price, the price of production and distribution. The capitalist has to charge more than the Cost Price to make a profit; consequently, the consumer really pays two tributes—one to the property owner and the other to the manufacturer. In a socialized industry both these are out of the question. Only the Real Price will be charged, and even then small profits, such as the Post Office makes to-day, may be made to swell the national revenue.

The failure of the Labour Government in 1931 made many socialists, particularly members of the I.L.P., impatient with the methods of Gradualism. Some think that Gradualism damps the vital enthusiasm of the true socialist for the great adventure of reconstruction. Others think that the Webb variety of Socialism is too optimistic. It underrates the strength of the property owners who may, as in Germany, put up a fight or create a paralysing financial panic if they are in danger of being dispossessed.

But it is doubtful whether under present conditions any more radical form of Socialism will convince the

electorate. Furthermore, it is probable that a more radical programme will endanger the working of the Two-Party System. As Lord Balfour once pointed out, parliamentary government only works when there exists an agreement on fundamentals between opposing parties. They must agree that the economic foundations of society are untouchable, however much they may differ on other matters. When you have a radical socialist party seeking to reconstruct the organization and the very motives of the social structure, and a reactionary conservative party attempting to preserve it intact, you have a cleavage which it is impossible to bridge. The banks, for example, cannot be nationalized by one government and then de-nationalized by another a few years later.

Our subject, however, is not the particular proposals but the principles of the Labour Party programme. The experience of the success of State controlled industry during the War changed Socialism from the creed of an ineffective sect to that of the leading opposition party in the State. With many of its underlying principles the majority of people agree. Most men would like to see a society in which there was a greater degree of Security and Equality; few would be found to defend the moral standards of what Professor Tawney calls 'the acquisitive society' functioning independent of all social control.

Who are at present for or against Socialism as a political programme? In the ranks of the Labour Party will be found, firstly, those seeking the material advantages of hours, wages and living conditions promised by Socialism. The industrial worker is the backbone of the Party; but there are also those middle-class idealists who are shocked at the waste and

injustice prevalent to-day. There are also the technicians and the so-called intelligentsia, 'the Radical-Bolsheviks of Oxford,' as Mussolini calls them, who are convinced of the inherent instability of Capitalism. Those opposed to Socialism would include the owners of property, most of those engaged in agricultural, professional workers, the majority of the upper and middle classes; in fact all those who are doing fairly well under present conditions, or who are convinced that Socialism simply won't work.

There remains the large floating body called the independent electorate which holds the balance of power in its hands. Since 1931 this section has doubted the competence of the Labour Party to perform what it promises. In France, however, in the Scandinavian countries, New Zealand, and elsewhere, socialist parties are in power. What of the future? Capitalism must deliver the goods if it is to survive in its present form. Possibly it may transform itself into something approximating that ideal on which all men are agreed. But another slump or another war would certainly create a situation in which the adoption of one or other of the new gospels is a distinct possibility, even in this country.

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II

COMMUNISM

TO use the word 'Socialism' to cover both the idea of the Labour and the Communist parties only leads to confusion. Labour parties of this and other countries have no affiliation with Communism. Compared with State Socialism of the Fabian pattern, Marxian Socialism or Communism is far more revolutionary in method and dogmatic in belief. The difference between the three New Gospels described in this section may best be seen by comparing their attitudes to the State. Socialism regards the State as a welfare agent. Communism regards it as the instrument of class oppression—'a conspiracy of the rich, who make plots for their own convenience and call their intrigues laws,' as Sir Thomas More called it; the State must therefore be captured and ultimately destroyed. The Fascist, on the other hand, views the State as the embodiment of the highest good to which even the life of the individual may be sacrificed.

Communism is the philosophy of political economy constructed by Karl Marx (1818-83). He was the son of a German Jewish lawyer who later became a Christian; he comes therefore of the class which he spent his life in vilifying. At the time of his education Germany was dominated by the philosophy of Hegel (1770-1831); from Hegel Marx inherited a passion for systematization unknown to British Socialism, and also the basis of his historical theory. After some years of

journalism he went to Paris where he came into contact with the French socialists, Proudhon, St. Simon, Louis Blanc and Fourier. In France he learned that the method of historical evolution must be revolutionary; but he was soon to ridicule the fantastic ideas of these socialists. He called them Utopians, purveyors of 'pocket editions of the New Jerusalem.' What he wanted was a scientific Socialism, a theory which proved how and why Socialism *must* come about.

In Paris he met another socialist, Frederick Engels by name, who was a Manchester business-man with an extensive knowledge of British working-class conditions. Engels was a modest man; he conceived an intense admiration for Marx and consequently underrated the very important part he himself played in the evolution of Marxism. Marx was indebted to him not only for much of his factual material, but also for an annuity which enabled him to live in London. The England to which Marx came was the England of the Chartists and of orthodox economists like Ricardo. The ideas of the former coloured Marx's doctrine of the class war, and those of the latter provided him with the basis of his economic theories. Soon after his arrival in London he was asked by a working-class organization to draw up a programme. The result was the epoch-making *Communist Manifesto* (1848). This pamphlet outlines the doctrines which guide Russia to-day. As a piece of revolutionary propaganda it is unsurpassed; the language is plain and vigorous, the theories deceptively simple, the conclusion a trumpet call to world revolution. Above all, it is Scientific Socialism, a practical answer to the working-man's question, 'What can we do to be saved?' It gives the assurance of success, for it shows that the law of pro-

gress makes Communism inevitable; half the battle is won when you convince your followers that victory is bound to be theirs.

Immediately after the publication of the Manifesto the revolutions of 1848 broke out. Marx went to join his German comrades; on their failure he was exiled for the rest of his life. In London he lived for thirty years a life of poverty and industry compiling an indictment of Capitalism by research in the British Museum—the birthplace of more than one revolutionary creed. The first volume of his longest work, *Capital*, appeared in 1867. It is a detailed analysis of the evils of Capitalism and a prophecy of its decline. Though really a description of the capitalist system at a particular period in a particular place, it remains the Bible of international Communism to-day. 'Whenever we encounter any difficulty in the management of the factory,' the manager of a Soviet electrical concern recently told a journalist, 'we look in that book and find the solution.'

A contemporary describes Marx's appearance as follows: 'He combined with his commanding forehead and great overhanging brow, his fierce glittering eyes, broad sensitive nose and mobile mouth, all surrounded by a setting of untrimmed hair and beard, the righteous fury of the great seers of his race with the cold analytical power of the Jewish doctors.' As with all great revolutionaries, the inspiration of his work was deep sympathy with the oppressed and a passion for social justice. He lived a life of unremitting toil in the interests of a class to which he did not belong. In private life he showed a benevolent character, but in public he was quarrelsome and violent in his attacks on those who disagreed with him. 'Hatred outweighs love in his heart,'

Mazzini wrote, 'which is not right even if the hatred may in itself have foundation.' As a thinker he is distinguished by a keen, systematic intelligence with a distinct practical bias. The basis of his thought is the maxim, Theory and Practice are One. He was not an abstract philosopher, but a true political economist. 'The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point however is to *change* it.'

From the philosopher's point of view Marxism is materialistic. Its founder reacted to Hegel as Aristotle reacted to Plato. For Hegel, Thoughts are more important than Things; the 'real' is the abstract ideal; hence ideals, such as Nationalism, create institutions such as the State. Marx said the opposite. According to Hegel the process of thinking rules the world; 'with me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind and translated into terms of thought.' Christianity, Hegel would say, created the Church; economic conditions, says Marx, are responsible for its growth and the colour of its doctrines. At every point practice determines theory, economics determine politics and even art and religion. An idea is no more than the *fruit* of a social system. Thus it is no good preaching ideals of freedom, as the liberals do; what we must do is control the environment in order to create the conditions under which freedom can flourish. For this attitude Marx is largely indebted to the obscure German philosopher Feuerbach, from whom it is sufficient to quote two sentences: 'Man is what he eats'; 'it is not thought which determines being, but being which determines thought.' Thus Marxian materialism is more correctly called, as it is in France, Economic Determinism.

Marx owed to Hegel his conception of history as the evolution of society by means of the process called Dialectic. The term is based on the Greek work for an argument. In a conversation A puts forward one view, called a thesis; his opponent B contradicts this with an antithesis; after some wrangling they may agree on a new position made up of both their views, a synthesis. Applying this to history, Hegel showed that truth or progress only arises out of a conflict of errors, that 'contradiction is the power that moves things.' The course of progress is something in the nature of 'developing in spirals, not in a straight line.' Thus an idea embodied in an institution (say Feudalism) is overthrown by a contrary idea (Capitalism) which grows up within it and replaces its predecessor with a new, but temporary, period of ascendancy. For example, in the nineteenth century the theory of Laissez-faire arose in opposition to the policy of Mercantilism or State control; it reached its peak in Cobden's Free Trade Treaty of 1860; but already a rival idea, that of Collectivism, was appearing to remedy its deficiencies.

This illuminating explanation of the historical process was adopted by Marx with a difference. He said that he found the theory standing on its head and turned it right side up. He meant that, as in his view the material was the real, ideas changed because economic systems changed. Hegel mistook effects for causes.

'What else does the history of ideas prove than that intellectual production changes its character in proportion as material production is changed? The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class.'

Hegel's definition of the process, said Marx, is perfectly correct; but his treatment is abstract and therefore his conclusions are fallacious. Hegel never explains *why* changes should occur at all, why one idea should supersede another; nor did he trouble to test his theory with the facts and show *how* the changes actually came about. In answering these questions Marx gives us his interpretation of history, the key which unlocks the problems set by such test events as those of 1648, 1789 and 1848. Revolutions occur when the means of production in a given society change, and when in consequence one class overthrows another class.

'The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of the Class Struggle.' With these words the Communist Manifesto introduces a summary of the theory. In the feudal epoch the landowning aristocracy was predominant; they were overthrown by the bourgeoisie as a result of the expansion of trade and the rise of the factory or capitalist system. Our own epoch, the Manifesto continues, the epoch of Capitalism, 'has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other—bourgeoisie and proletariat.' The time will come by the working out of 'the economic laws of motion in modern society' when the proletariat will oust the bourgeoisie from the seat of government and set up its own dictatorship. Then the State, the instrument by which the governing class exercises power, will 'wither away' and the free, final equalitarian, communist society will come into being.

'The materialist conception of history starts from the principle that production, and with production

the exchange of its products, is the basis of every social order; that in every society which has appeared in history the distribution of the products, and with it the division of society into classes or estates, is determined by what is exchanged. According to this conception, the ultimate causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in the minds of men, in their increasing insight into eternal truth and justice, but in changes in the mode of production and exchange; they are to be sought not in the *philosophy* but in the *economics* of the epoch concerned.' (Engels)¹

The Materialist Interpretation of History is obviously much more than an explanation of the nature of Progress; it is also a political programme. As an interpretation of history it must be tested with facts. To what extent did Marx mistake a Theory for a Law of scientific accuracy? It is certainly a brilliant generalization, but the evidence is insufficient. His reading of history is an unduly simple explanation of a highly complex process. In the sphere of art, for example, economic motives may explain the 'work song,' but they do not explain the symphony. By explaining the origin of an activity, say the festival origin of drama,² we do not explain that activity in its widest and highest stage of manifestation.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the

¹ Cf., Marx: 'Middle class historians long ago described the evolution of class struggles, and political economists explained the economic physiology of classes. My contribution has been to add the following theses: (1) that the existing classes are bound up with certain phases of material production; (2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat; (3) that this dictatorship is merely the transition to the abolition of all classes, and the creation of a free and equal society.'

² The earliest plays grew out of dances performed at the seasonal festivals.

Marxian theory is that ideals have no reality, that they are but reflections of social organization. That there is a great deal of truth in this can be seen from the changes in religion and morality during various epochs. In this book it has been seen again and again how ideas only become of any practical significance when conditions are suitable for their adoption. But equally important is the work of religious and moral leaders who leave the impress of their own personal viewpoints on history. Men are more willing to fight for Ideals than they are for Facts. To say that mere monetary motives explain everything is nonsense; such motives do not explain the secret of the lives of Marx or Lenin, or the history of the Quakers, or the Abolition of Slavery. Nationalism, Socialism, not to mention innumerable religious creeds, seem to be ideals with a life of their own.

If the materialist explanation were as narrow as this it would hardly be worth worrying about. Engels himself pointed out that 'when anyone distorts our statement so as to read that the economic element is the sole element, he converts the statement into a meaningless abstract and absurd phrase.' Hence the theory has been expanded out of all recognition. As with Christianity, it is possible to read almost anything into Marxism. For the sake of simplicity the cruder form of the theory may have been unduly stressed; but that is its essence; the rest is gloss. At its broadest the theory implies that the political, cultural, religious activities of society are all determined by its economic organization. Economics certainly determine part of the movements of history; but 'man does not live by bread alone.' Marx, like Machiavelli, underestimates the strength of ideas; he explains much, but he does not explain the martyr.

It is not merely Ideas which Marx denies to have any importance in the development of civilization, but men themselves. The movement makes the man—usually. 'Men make their own history, but they do not do so spontaneously under conditions they have themselves chosen. On the contrary, they must make it upon terms handed down to them and determined.' History, continues Marx, is determinist, it dictates politics. He excludes altogether the element of chance, of which Voltaire wrote, 'the older one becomes, the more clearly one sees that King Hazard fashions three-fourths of the events in this miserable world.' If Mahomet had been killed in his first skirmish, if Charles Martel had been defeated at Tours, if Napoleon had been shot down at the bridge of Lodi, how different would the course of history have been?

The Materialist Interpretation of History does not explain the decline of Rome or the outbreak of the Great War. It is too rational to account for psychological movements like the advance of Nationalism, too materialist to explain the power of ideals over the mind. Above all, it states that heretofore it has been impossible to control economic forces. It is therefore impossible, according to the Communist, to plan Capitalism; but apparently it is quite possible to plan Socialism. At any rate the course of history is laid down. Marx, like Darwin, works out a law of evolution. 'Marxism,' says Lenin, 'provides a clue which enables us to discover the reign of law in the seeming labyrinth and chaos of history: the theory of the class struggle.'

The theory which Marx provided did much to correct the old kings-and-battles treatment of history. If the plan of a modern standard history is compared with that of one fifty years old it will be seen how the

interaction of political and economic history is emphasized nowadays. The basis of history has been broadened to give a truer picture of the past, and the chief credit for this is due to Marx.

On the other hand his economic theories have long since been exploded. Why, he asked, was the distribution of wealth so unjust and why did the gulf dividing the classes widen? He found the answer in the theory of Surplus Value. According to Marx, Labour is the sole source of wealth; but under Capitalism the worker does not get paid the equivalent of his work. Say a man works twelve hours for a wage of 10s. and produces an article sold at £1. The remaining 10s., the equivalent of six hours' work, is the Surplus Value over and above the actual Labour Value, or wage cost, of the article; in fact it is profit grabbed by the capitalist who thus 'exploits' the worker. A distinction is thus drawn between Value, which should be determined by the quantity of labour entailed, and Price. But it is obvious that this is no true explanation of Price. It overlooks, among other things, the premium on skill, the cost of distribution, overhead and managerial costs, not to mention the element of demand.

There are passages in which Marx tries to reconcile these contradictions; but it is the popular version of his theory which makes it of practical importance. The wage slave can look upon himself as sweated by his employer who does no work and takes a fat profit. Marx's theory is far too abstract to explain scientifically how prices are actually determined. It is really a moral, not an economic theory; it is the application of ideas of natural justice, of the right to equal remuneration for equal work done, to the realm of industry. Like the

theory of Rent, it is a weapon wrested from the hands of orthodox economists in order to destroy Capitalism.

As Capitalism develops, wages are driven down to subsistence level; such is the Iron Law of Wages. An employer will never pay less than the subsistence level because that would starve the worker out of existence; but he will never pay more because, such is the competition to earn a living, he can always get other workers at the cheapest rate. Marx deduces from this the Law of Increasing Misery—i.e. the gulf widens and the poverty of the proletariat increases. This 'law' bears little relation to modern conditions. It was evolved before labour learned to force wages up by collective bargaining and before the benefits of the Social Service State came into operation. The whole Marxist analysis of society into two antagonistic classes is, as was seen in the last chapter, a fallacy. "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries, unite!" But the modern working man, as the Savings Bank proves, has often considerably more than his chains to lose. And, after all, who is the working man? The riveter, the clerk, the manager, the architect? Society is made up of a multitude of subdivisions merging into each other.¹

In his Law of Concentration of Capital, Marx proved a far more accurate prophet. He foresaw the advance of trustification and the dominance of the financier. This was the final stage of Capitalism, which Communists say we have reached to-day:

¹ Engels realized as much: "The British working class is actually becoming more and more bourgeois, and it seems that this most bourgeois of all nations wants to bring matters to such a pass as to have a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat side by side with the bourgeoisie."

'Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working class, a class always increasing in numbers and disciplined, united, organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.'

We have considered Marx's view of the past and of the present. He regarded making detailed prophecies about the future a waste of time. Our business, he says, is to change the present, seize the bourgeois State, set up a Dictatorship of the Proletariat and 'liquidate' all opponents. 'The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organized as a ruling class; and to improve the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible.' That was written in 1848; it exactly describes the U.S.S.R. in 1936.

The next step, about which Lenin has more to say in *The State and Revolution* (1917), will see the 'withering away' of the State. 'It must obviously be a rather lengthy process,' but it will occur because the socialization of the means of production eliminates the causes of Class conflict. Society gradually becomes classless and we enter upon the Communist society, a federation of voluntary organizations in which there will be a new heaven and a new earth: 'when people have become accustomed to observe the fundamental rules of social

life, and their labour is so productive that they voluntarily work according to their ability...there will then be no need for any exact calculation by society of the quantity of products to be distributed to each of its members; each will take freely according to his needs.'

Both Socialism and Communism are international creeds. Socialism has always opposed Imperialism and aggressive Nationalism, though the War proved that the majority of its adherents had by no means lost their nationalist outlook. To-day they pin their faith to the League of Nations and the method of international agreement. But Communism goes farther. It is a cosmopolitan creed which believes that class interests outweigh nationalist prejudices. The duty of the proletariat is to foment strife in order to sabotage the capitalist machine. 'The proletarians have in all countries one and the same interest, one and the same fight in prospect; the proletarians are by nature without national prejudices, and their whole culture and movement is essentially humanitarian, anti-national. Only the proletarians can destroy nationality.'

Because Marx himself had no Nationalism in his make-up he believed that the same was true of other people. With the aim of fomenting international revolution he founded the First International. This organization lasted from 1864 to 1872. It broke up after a quarrel with the Anarchists.¹

In 1888 Engels founded the Second International which still exists as a federation of national labour parties; it ceased to be a Communist body in 1914. It counted a wealth of talent among its members—Lenin,

¹ Anarchism, founded by Bakunin, is the opposite of Communism because it preaches extreme individualism. It is an impracticable doctrine popular with the old Nihilists and only to be found to-day in parts of Spain.

Mussolini, MacDonald, Shaw, Briand, etc. In 1919 the Third International, the Moscow Comintern, was founded and still exists as a semi-official body in the U.S.S.R.

As its name implies, the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics is a federation of 11 National Republics and 22 Autonomous Republics formed out of 180 nationalities which possess, in theory, the right of secession. Communism wishes to organize the world along similar lines. When he founded the Comintern as a general staff for world revolution Lenin thought that the advent of world Communism was imminent. These hopes soon faded and he began to make agreements with capitalist countries. Under Stalin this policy has been carried further. Not only has the U.S.S.R. joined the League (which earlier Communists regarded as a band of robbers), but defensive alliances and trade agreements have been signed with democratic countries. This pacific foreign policy contradicts the methods of the Comintern, whose meetings have become increasingly rare. It is over this policy that Stalin and Trotsky quarrel. According to the latter, who is busy founding a Fourth International, Stalin has betrayed the Marxist creed. Stalin's reply is that the best advertisement for Communism is to make a success of it in one country first. Nevertheless, he remains a member of the Comintern and thus sanctions a bewildering contradiction of policies. At one moment he is whipping up a militant national spirit, at another he talks about the dangers of a 'deviation' (the communist word for heresy) towards Nationalism.

This is one example of the way in which the pure milk of Marxism has been watered down to meet the needs of the moment. Even in Marx's own lifetime

there were others, called Revisionists, who wished to bring Marxism up to date. The Labour Party and the Social-Democrat parties belonged to this group. They found that the development of Capitalism destroyed the simplicity of the Marxist analysis of society into two antagonistic classes, and they inclined to the type of Socialism described in the last chapter. First Marx and then Lenin attacked them violently. According to Lenin the benefits accruing from pre-war Capitalism were only the result of a temporary respite afforded by the profits of expanding imperial markets. The doom of Capitalism was inevitable; the Revisionists were shortsighted opportunists, 'political detachments of the bourgeoisie,' for the capitalist state can never be used for socialist purposes. It must be destroyed, and the capitalists must be expropriated by force, not by taxation. Democracy is a sham in capitalist states. It means the freedom of the few; real freedom can never be won by Fabian measures. 'Democracy for the vast majority and suppression by force of the exploiters and oppressors of the people—this is the modification of Democracy during the *transition* from Capitalism to Communism. Only in the communist society...the State ceases to exist and it becomes possible to speak of freedom.'

At this point it will be as well to draw up a balance sheet of Marxism in its pre-Russian form. Marx was correct in prophesying the increasing importance of economics in politics; he was correct in showing that the economic element had been overlooked by historians; he was the first to expose the fallacy of commercialism, to show that the volume of trade is no true test of national well-being; he foresaw the increasing severity of the trade cycle and the advance of

trustification; he foretold Communism, though he thought it would occur first in a highly industrialized country like England, and not in an agricultural country like Russia. On the other hand he never saw the possibilities of the Trade Union movement or the Social Service State; he said that 'Capitalism produces its own grave-diggers,' whereas in reality it produces a host of petty capitalists, shareholders, etc., who are far from wishing to destroy the State. He never considered the psychological aspect of politics. He did not realize that most men hate violence and love their country. The century which came after him produced the Great War, race hatred, economic Nationalism, even a measure of planned Capitalism, not the international solidarity of the working classes or a world revolution.

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The biggest social experiment of modern times, the process of putting Marxism into practice, has revealed a number of curious paradoxes. The growth of old-fashioned Nationalism in the U.S.S.R. would have astonished Marx. The religious veneration felt for his doctrine would have embarrassed him. *Capital* is the Bible of Communism. Its tenets are thrashed out with all the polemical vigour of angry theologians; heresy hunts, purges, public confessions are frequent; pilgrimages to the embalmed corpse of Lenin, the asceticism of the Party members, the worship of the machine—all these are manifestations of that religious instinct which Communism strives to deny. Above all the success of the experiment is due, contrary to Marxist historical theory, to the personal accident of Lenin's leadership.

Lenin was that very rare type, a practical idealist, a revolutionary who could construct as well as destroy. No other statesman could have rescued Russia from chaos as he did. And he could do it only because he had organized the right sort of Party, an energetic, ruthless, highly centralized band of professional revolutionists. In 1903 the Bolsheviks under Lenin seceded from the larger socialist party, the Mensheviks, because their leader refused to include mere amateurs and sympathizers within the ranks. With the aid of this minority of disciplined believers, who numbered only thirty thousand out of a population of 150 million in 1917, Lenin was able to carry through the Revolution. This Bolshevik, or Communist Party, still remains a carefully picked minority, a spearhead of enterprise.¹ The period of candidature is long, discipline is strict, and members deny themselves any income above a certain figure, though as skilled workers they might be entitled to more. 'The Party is not a debating society,' said Lenin; they discuss measures and elect officers or Commissars, but once a decision is taken it must be adhered to without criticism. Its head is the Politbureau of ten, of which Stalin is secretary. This 'democratic centralism' and the fanaticism of the whole organization reminds one of an order like that of the Dominicans or the Jesuits. The OGPU (secret police) plays the part of the Inquisition, and the unfortunate Kulaks (small land-owners) that of the heretics.

In theory the government of Russia is supposed to be extremely democratic; hence the elaborately intricate constitution of elected Soviets, or councils. But the

¹In 1935 it numbered 3 million, excluding the Young Communists (aged 14-23), the Pioneers (10-16) and the Little Octobrists (8-11). The word Bolshevik means Majority.

Party exists side by side with this pyramid of Soviets, local, regional and national; and, as Stalin confesses, 'The dictatorship of the proletariat is, substantially, the dictatorship of the Party as the force which effectively guides the proletariat.' Does this mean that Stalin is a real dictator? A few quotations from the most authoritative survey of modern Russia will suffice for an answer:

'First let it be noted that, unlike Mussolini, Hitler and other modern dictators, Stalin is not invested by law with any authority over his fellow citizens, and not even over the members of the Party to which he belongs.... So far as grade or dignity is concerned, Stalin is in no sense the highest official in the U.S.S.R. ... He is, in fact, only the General Secretary of the Party, receiving his salary from Party funds and holding his office by appointment by the Party Central Committee.... We do not think that the Party is governed by the will of a single person; or that Stalin is the sort of person to claim or desire such a position' (S. and B. Webb).

It must be added that the hero worship felt for him makes his removal practically impossible. In view of the recent Trotskyite purge it would appear that the government of the U.S.S.R. must still, in spite of its democratic pretensions, be described as an autocratic bureaucracy ruling by means of terrorist methods. It must never be forgotten that the character of the Soviet State is distinctly Asiatic in character; hence it contrives, as a recent observer has well said, 'to double the roles of fairy godmother and demon king, popping up out of trap-doors all over the place, keeping hope alive as well as fear.'

Three main stages may be distinguished in the history of the Communist experiment. In 1917 Lenin was smuggled across the frontier by the German General Staff to spread the poison of revolution in the moribund Tsarist structure. From 1917 to 1921 is the period of Revolution and Militant Communism. War and famine won over the army and the peasantry to the cause of the town workers.¹ But chaos, begun by civil war and intensified by famine, reigned in spite of ruthless terrorism. In 1921 Lenin realized that the whole experiment was on the point of failure. He ordered a complete *volte face*; '*reculer pour mieux sauter*' was his strategy. Private trading and ownership was allowed once more during the N.E.P. (New Economic Plan) period lasting from 1921 to 1929. In 1924 Lenin died and there followed a personal duel for leadership between Trotsky, the founder of the Red Army, and Stalin, the secretary of the Party, which ended in the exile of the former. In 1929 Stalin launched the first Five Year Plan. Once more Communism became militant. By cruel methods the Kulaks were starved into joining the collective farms and immense industrial plans were put into operation. Contrary to the prophecies of every economist, production totals soon exceeded the most optimistic figures.²

Communism is still in the stage of transition prophesied by Marx. Force rules. There is no practical evidence of the State withering away. But the publication of the New Constitution in 1935 does point towards a greater degree of freedom. Most Western observers

¹ It is obvious from what has been said of Marx's theories that Communism is essentially an urban creed.

² The following Soviet figures of total production give a rough idea of the advance made: 1913—100 per cent., 1921—21 per cent., 1925—89 per cent., 1930—201 per cent., 1934—300 per cent.

doubt whether it will ever be put into practice. It may be sheer bluff to impress Western countries; but, taking it at its face value, it is an astonishingly liberal document. It is another Declaration of Rights; but it legalizes what the earlier Declarations omitted, the conditions under which those Rights may flourish—the socialization of the means of production. It provides for direct, universal, secret voting to elect two Chambers. Candidates representing various groups may stand, but there are no parties in the Parliamentary sense of the word. To the Communist the word 'party' implies class interest. In a classless State there can only be one party, the Communist Party, which is described as 'the vanguard of the toilers in their struggle for strengthening and developing the socialist system.' As to the Rights recognized, these include *all* those mentioned in earlier declarations, with the exception of the right of property. In its place is the right to work, to holidays with pay, pensions and insurance and education. All citizens, irrespective of religion, sex, race have equal rights. Article 124 is particularly interesting:

'To ensure to citizens freedom of conscience the church in the U.S.S.R. is separated from the state and the school from the church. Freedom to perform religious rites and freedom of anti-religious propaganda is recognized for all citizens.'

It is well known that religious persecution is frequent in the U.S.S.R. The government permits 'Anti-God' propaganda, but it has always prohibited religious instruction. Marx, the materialist, called religion 'opium for the people,' and Communism remains incompatible with Christianity.

The Marxist experiment has existed long enough to

make it possible to inquire whether a new civilization is evolving. Some observers, such as the Webbs, are convinced that this is so. They distinguish the emergence of a new morality based on ideals of social service. The idea of sin is quite foreign to the young Communist; in place of it there is disapproval of anti-social acts. Drunkenness is condemned not for excess, but for inefficiency; the death penalty is used not for murder, but for theft of state goods. A competitive team spirit replaces profit as the incentive to work. In this new society Fraternity and Equality already exist on a larger scale than in any society heretofore; but not Liberty. 'We want to abolish classes,' said Lenin, 'and in that respect we are in favour of equality; but the claim that we want to make all men equal to each other is an empty phrase and a stupid invention of intellectuals.' As to Liberty, it is 'a bourgeois prejudice'; but he also said, 'It is true that liberty is precious—so precious that it must be rationed.' Finally, as evidence of a new type of society, there is a State planned in the interests of all according to a technique unknown to previous societies. In a recent speech Stalin explains how much progress has been made towards the ideal:

'In the main we have already achieved the first phase of Communism, Socialism.... But Soviet society has not yet reached the higher phase of communism, in which the ruling principle will be, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs," although it sets itself the aim of achieving the higher phase of Communism in the future.'

Is the experiment worth the suffering it has undoubtedly cost? Does the end justify the means? That

is the question every man must ask himself. It depends on the answer mankind gives whether Communism remains the creed of a closed state, or whether it will spread throughout the world.

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III

FASCISM

'A SPECTRE is haunting Europe—the spectre of Communism!' That sounds like Hitler; actually it is the opening of the Communist Manifesto of 1848. Fascism claims the gratitude of the rest of the world for saving Central Europe from Bolshevism. Much as Western democrats dislike Communism, they are not at all sure that they want to be saved by Fascism. Indeed, they are not convinced that the peril was, or is, quite as serious as the Fascist pretends. It is said that Germany in 1933 and Italy in 1922 were on the brink of Bolshevism. It would be more correct to say that in both countries liberal democracy committed suicide; it surrendered its freedom into the hands of a revolutionary minority drawn from the upper and middle classes in return for the vague promises of salvation promised by a new party. That was something which no one, least of all Karl Marx, foresaw.

Fascism is not a doctrine but an attitude. It differs from Communism in that it is not a political or economic creed evolved before a revolution began. It is essentially an opportunist policy which makes inconsistency a method of politics. Mussolini's attitude, even after he had become a Fascist, was the reverse of what it has since become; as for the Nazi programme, it had to be all things to all men to increase its appeal in early years. Fascist leaders defend this lack of definition on the

grounds that theirs is a policy of action. Admitting that he had 'no specific doctrinal attitude in mind' when he founded his party, Mussolini says: 'We do not believe in dogmatic programmes, in that kind of rigid frame which is supposed to contain and sacrifice the changeable, changing and complex reality.... Doctrine, beautifully defined and carefully elucidated, with headlines and paragraphs, might be lacking; but there was to take its place something more decisive—faith.' Fascism distrusts the reason and despises logic as a method of argument. It relies on emotion, and therefore it prefers an attitude of devotion to the State to the balance sheet of rights and duties provided by other political philosophies. Fundamentally, Fascism is a preference for authority to freedom. It appears first 'under the form of a violent and dogmatic negation, as is the case with all emergent ideas.' It is a reaction against an individualistic attitude which permits inefficiency, corruption and decadence to creep into the State. In words which remind us of Napoleon III's Recall to Order after the anarchy of the 1848 Republic, a fascist apologist states that 'to the age of individualism, of an enfeebled State, of insubordination, succeeds the age of social being, of authority, of hierarchy.' To appreciate the strength of Fascism the difference between the temperament of the fascist peoples and our own must be borne in mind. Unification is their aim, not freedom. Theirs is a collectivist mentality which places Duties above Rights; their slogan is Common Good before Individual Good. Liberal democracy is therefore not congenial to them, however rational it may appear to us.

The manner in which Fascism came about best explains its nature. Various factors were necessary in

the social situation before the soil was prepared in which Fascism might flourish. First, a decadent political system which resembled older democracies in nothing but name. Secondly, a national character which prefers colour, military glory, personal rule, to the exercise of its own will-power. To satisfy this craving a leader with special gifts of personal magnetism and effective propaganda must be available. Next, a national grievance which he can exploit—the humiliating terms of a faulty peace treaty. Lastly, a period of economic distress in which any generous promises of betterment will find favour.

L'état c'est moi. Mussolini is Fascism and Fascism is the Italian State. As Chief of the Government he presides over the Fascist Grand Council which hand-picks a subservient parliament; as Duce he is the focus of the national life; as President of the Council of Corporations he organizes industry. He is a man of the people, the son of a village blacksmith. He grew up a revolutionary socialist and made his name as a violent journalist who attacked Imperialism, Militarism and Capitalism. In pre-war days only one man realized his true character and that was the syndicalist Sorel, who called him a *condottiere* after the Renaissance pattern. During the War Mussolini reversed his position. He now saw that Nationalism, which he, in common with his Marxist friends, had derided as a mere apology for Capitalism, was a far more potent gospel than Socialism. After a month at the front he was wounded by the explosion of a trench mortar. He returned to Milan and founded the Fascist Party in March, 1919.

In the autumn of that same year the poet and fighter, Gabriele D'Annunzio, made his attack on Fiume. The

coup was enormously popular in Italy, where it was generally felt that the country had been cheated out of her fair share of victory by the makers of the peace treaty. D'Annunzio's independent action made him the hero of the hour. He and his followers joined forces with Mussolini's Fascisti. It is from D'Annunzio's fertile imagination that Fascism inherits the appeal to Rome, the Roman Myth that once more a Roman Empire can be established with Roman trappings—the salute, the battle cry, the terminology, and the symbol of Unity with Authority: the Fasces or bundle of sticks bound together round an axe, which Roman lictors used to carry as the symbol of the State.

The Fiume exploit failed. With its failure the authority and popularity of parliamentary government declined. Italian democracy, which only lasted from 1870 to 1922, contained few genuine democratic elements. Democracy is a plant which requires time to acclimatize itself. Whether it could ever have become successful in Italy it is too late to say, but in its old form it was too colourless for an opera-loving people. Nor was the monarchy the symbol of national unity it is in this country. Parliament was unrepresentative, corrupt and inefficient. The mass of the people showed so little interest in politics that parliamentary parties were left free to intrigue among themselves. The Prime Minister could hold a government together only by a policy of bribes and concessions, with the result that executive authority was lacking. Strikes were frequent: a particularly serious wave in 1920 only collapsed because of the quarrels between the Socialists and the Communists. Indeed, all real danger of Bolshevism had disappeared, as Mussolini himself admitted before the

march on Rome.¹ Nevertheless, a general feeling of uneasiness prevailed throughout the country. The government tottered as it had often tottered before. The Socialists (not the Communists) had every chance to take office, but they shirked the responsibility. Meanwhile Fascism increased in the provinces because it promised to restore order. Employers, land-owners, ex-service men, even the government itself, supported it in order to hold the Socialists in check. Finally, Mussolini decided on a show of force, the March on Rome in October, 1922. This secured his control over parliament and once in power he gradually eliminated all opposition to his rule. Like Communism, Fascism is a minority movement. In 1922 there were 300,000 Party members; in 1937 the number was 2,100,000 (excluding youth organizations like the Balilla) out of a total population of 42,000,000. In the last free election held in 1921, 126 Socialists, 195 Democrats, 18 Communists and only 32 Fascists were returned to Parliament.

The strength of the Fascists lay outside Parliament in the streets and squares. How they and, like them, the Nazis, managed to secure such complete power in so short a time is admirably described in the prophetic chapter 17 of *News from Nowhere*, written by William Morris in 1890:

'Whatever the Government might do, a great part of the upper and middle classes were determined to set on foot a counter revolution: for the Communism which now loomed ahead seemed quite unendurable to them. Bands of young men armed themselves and drilled, and began on any opportunity to skirmish

¹ 'To say that the Bolshevik peril still exists in Italy is to mistake fears for realities. Bolshevism has been overthrown.'—*Popolo D'Italia*, 2 July, 1921.

with the people in the streets. The Government neither helped them, nor put them down, but stood by, hoping that something might come of it. These Friends of Order, as they were called, had some successes at first, and grew bolder; they got many officers of the regular army to help them, and by that means laid hold of munitions of war of all kinds.... A sort of irregular war was carried on with varied success all over the country; and at last the Government, which at first pretended to ignore the struggle, or treat it as mere rioting, definitely declared for the Friends of Order.'

The post-War situation in Germany was similar in all essentials. It is now the custom there to distinguish three Reichs, or Empires. The first lasted till 1871. During the second, Bismarck's Empire of 1871-1918, Democracy was extremely limited, the Chancellor not being responsible to the Reichstag for his actions. Then followed what is now regarded as an interregnum, the Weimar Republic of 1918 to 1933, during which the multi-party system worked with as little success as it did in Italy. The Third is the Nazi (National Socialist) Reich. The Republic was not so much crippled by its constitution, which looked well enough on paper, as by the international obligations imposed upon it by the Treaty of Versailles. Mortally affronted by the War Guilt clause which indicted Germany with sole responsibility for the Great War, the nation was tied hand and foot by demands for reparations. The victorious powers had hoped that Germany would become their milch cow in perpetuity. They refused to allow the statesmen of the Republic to make any drastic alterations in the economic structure of the state. If the government contemplated a move to the Right, there was talk about a

revival of Prussianism; if to the Left, there was the danger of Bolshevism. Internally the Social-Democrats were simultaneously attacked by the nationalists, as being subservient to the Allies, and by the Communists, as being the props of Capitalism. Then came the great slump which hit Germany harder than any other country. The government knew not which way to turn to escape the cycle of world depression.

The Nazi movement exploited these circumstances with generous promises of prosperity and effective attacks on a humiliating peace treaty. It had been founded by the son of an Austrian customs officer, Adolf Hitler, who earned his living before the War as a house painter. He grew up in the atmosphere of racial strife which prevailed in the old Austrian Empire. In that atmosphere he learned to hate the Austrians, because they would not unite with their German blood brothers, the Marxists, who blasphemed Hitler's sacred racial beliefs; and, above all, the Jews. The most vivid passage in his autobiography is a description how he first met an old Jew dressed in the gabardine of his race. Could this revolting monster be a human being? Could he really be a citizen possessing the same civic status as Hitler himself? In 1912 he was glad to move across the border to Munich and was thus able to join the German army at the outbreak of war. After two years at the front he was invalided home suffering from the effects of poison gas. In hospital he learned of Germany's defeat in 1918. To a nationalist of his temper defeat was impossible. What could be the explanation of this disaster? A stab in the back, he concluded; treachery on the part of Marxist Jews in Berlin, where 'a gang of wretched criminals had laid hands upon the Fatherland.'

'With the Jews,' he thereupon decided, 'there can be no bargaining, but only a choice between one thing or the other. So I resolved to become a politician.' In 1919 he founded a tiny group called the National-Socialist German Workers' Party, whose programme as late as 1926 included such definitely socialistic items as abolition of unearned income, nationalization of trusts and confiscation of armament profits. He was soon joined by an ex-air officer, Hermann Goering, and a young man with consummate propagandist abilities, Dr. Goebbels. In 1923 they decided to put their fortunes to the test, but their attempt at a *coup d'état* failed, in spite of the aid given by General Ludendorf. Hitler found himself in prison. He occupied his time by writing his autobiography, *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*), which is to-day compulsory reading on the part of every German citizen. Its impact on the foreign mind was till recently softened by the exclusion in translation of half the book. It is not a book which an Englishman finds easy to read. The style is rhetorical, the treatment mystical; the matter is not cast in the form of a rational argument, but consists of a repetition of passages vilifying Jews and Marxists indiscriminately. A psychologist would say that it was the work of a man suffering from persecution mania. Considering the circumstances under which it was written, this may be the truth; yet it remains—although frequently contradicted in practice—the official Bible of the Nazi faith, just as *Capital* is the Holy Book of Communism.

When Hitler came out of prison he found matters changed for the worse. Germany was sliding down the slope towards bankruptcy. The middle classes had already experienced such a disaster when they saw their savings disappear with the inflation of the currency

after the War. They were determined that should not happen again. Throughout the bleak year 1932 the Social-Democratic government strove desperately to stave off revolution from the Right or from the Left. In the election of July, 1932, the Nazi poll leapt to 37 per cent of the total. After a succession of short-lived Chancellors, President Hindenburg appointed Hitler in January 1933, hoping that the responsibility of office would curb his radical tendencies and a Nationalist coalition might weather the storm. In a plebiscite in March, 1933, this government polled 52 per cent of the votes cast, the specifically Nazi proportion being 44 per cent. That was enough for Hitler. The German Revolution was carried through swiftly—and thoroughly.

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From what has been said about the history of Fascism it is clear that its character is that of a restoration of order. The programmes of the various Fascist parties in Europe may therefore differ superficially, but all—Fascisti, Nazis, Rexists, Croix de Feu, Franco's Falangists, or Mosley's Black Shirts—agree on their attitude to the State. That is what makes Fascism as universal a creed as Communism. Mussolini began by denying that it was a creed for export; but in 1930 he affirmed that 'one can foresee a Fascist Europe, a Europe which is inspired by Fascist institutions, the doctrines and the practice of Fascism.'

The basis of Fascism is an old political theory, not a new one, as is the case with Communism.¹ We have already met it in Machiavelli's *Prince*, which remains an

¹ Its practice is equally old. Cf., Strafford's policy of 'Thorough, or the policies of Napoleon I and Napoleon III.

up-to-date analysis of the principles underlying the foreign policy of Fascist states. Another Fascist book of early date is Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651). Hobbes uses the theory of the Social Contract not, as it was normally used, to limit the powers of the ruler, but to erect the most complete of despotisms. The state of nature, says Hobbes, is a state of fear, of insecurity, and war; men therefore require 'a common power to keep them in awe and to direct their actions to the common benefit.' This can be provided if a contract is made whereby men surrender all their natural liberties and confer the fullest powers upon one man, or one sovereign assembly, which thereby becomes 'the mortal god,' the great Leviathan. Once the sovereign is appointed, the individual has no right against the State except the right of self-preservation, to maintain which he entered into the contract. Locke opposed this authoritarian doctrine; but in Rousseau the influence of both Hobbes and Locke meet with the most surprising results. Rousseau dared not develop the authoritarian element in his theory, because it contradicted what he had learned from Locke. Nevertheless, a complete apology for despotism is to be found in his theory of the General Will. This represents the *real* will of society. It is not the same thing as the will of the majority, nor even the will of all; it is something more than public opinion because it is always *right*; it is an instinct for what is permanently valuable and it is embodied in the laws. 'Whoever shall refuse to obey the general will shall be constrained to do so by the whole body, which means nothing else than that he will be forced to be free.' A legislator is needed to interpret this abstraction, and thus the way is made clear for dictatorship. Hegel originated Fascism by developing this side of Rous-

seau's theory. Like Rousseau, he is the founder of two antagonistic lines of thought—one line leading through Marx to Communism, the other through the English theorist Bosanquet, and German theorists like Treitschke, to Fascism.

The name given to the doctrine taught by Hegel and Bosanquet is the Metaphysical Theory of the State. 'Metaphysical' because the state they describe is more of an Idea than the actual state in the ordinary sense of the word. A better description of this type of state is the word 'Totalitarian.' In the Fascist view the State is not just the machinery of government, but something which permeates and sums up in itself every activity in social life. The State is the Nation; it is identified with Society, and it has a life of its own. 'For the Fascist,' says Mussolini, 'all is in the State and nothing human or spiritual exists and much less has any value outside the State. In this sense Fascism is totalitarian, and the Fascist State, the synthesis and unity of all values, interprets, develops, and gives power to every aspect of the life of the people.'

Democratic theory starts from an individualistic point of view. It regards the welfare of the individual as the aim of political organization. Fascist theory starts from the opposite point of view. It argues that man is a social animal; he grows up a member of a group which is itself a part of the larger organism called Society or the Nation State. His selfish instincts are anti-social; he must set before himself the aim of sacrifice on behalf of society. The individual is simply not recognized as such, but only as a cell in the organism of society. Only in the service of society can he find true freedom, and he is free in as much as he identifies himself with the will of the whole. This is positive

freedom, the only true freedom. Democratic theory interprets Liberty as something negative--freedom from restraint in order to develop personality; therefore it regards Fascist freedom as only another name for slavery.

Once the basis of the Hegelian-Fascist doctrine is understood, viz., that the State is organized society, and that freedom exists in identification with the general will, the rest of the theory is comparatively simple. The frontispiece of Hobbes's *Leviathan* shows a gigantic Person composed of innumerable little men--something like a maggoty giant. The State is the individual writ large--written so large that he is lost sight of altogether. The State is something more than the individuals which compose it:

'Fascism conceives of the state as an absolute, in comparison with which all individuals or groups are relative, only to be conceived of in their relation to the state.... The Fascist state is itself conscious, and has itself a will and a personality--thus it may be called the ethical state.... The State, as conceived of and as created by Fascism is a spiritual and moral fact in itself. The Italian Nation is an organism with purposes, a life, and means of action transcending in power and duration those of individuals, singly or grouped, which compose it. It is a moral, political and economic unity which realizes itself in the Fascist State.'¹ (Mussolini).

As the State is the embodiment of society, its leader may be compared to the brain--something which feels

¹ Cf., Hitler: 'We, as Aryans, can only conceive the State as the living organism of a folk community, an organism that not only ensures the maintenance of this community but leads it to the highest freedom by the development of its intellectual and ideal capabilities.'

the needs of the body and decides how best to satisfy them. The State, being, in Hegel's words, 'a self-conscious, ethical substance and a self-knowing and self-actualizing individual,' the leader interprets the General Will of society. He always knows best. The individual should not try to decide for himself what is right or wrong, or what course of action to take; he should rather surrender his private judgment and do what he is told. He has indeed no 'rights' at all, but only his duty to the State. Hence representative government and government by argument is replaced by government by the authority and commands of appointed officials (hierarchy).

The primacy of the State is the basis of Fascism. Hegel's claims for its pre-eminent position may be thought extravagant, but they are echoed in modern Fascism: 'The State is the divine idea as it exists on earth.... All the worth which the human being possesses—all spiritual reality he possesses through the State.... The State is its own end. It is the ultimate end which has the highest right against the individual, whose highest duty is to be a member of the State.'¹ It is interesting to compare with this the individualist attitude of Einstein, who has been driven into exile by this creed of the Nation State: 'The really valuable thing in the pageant of human life seems to me not the State but the creative, sentient individual, the personality; it alone creates the noble and the sublime, while the herd as such remains dull in thought and dull in feeling.'

If the State is sovereign, not merely in that it has no political superior, but that it is not subject to any moral law, its attitude in international affairs is simple.

¹ Cf., Hitler's slogan: 'You are nothing, your people (*Volk*) is all.'

'It is hard to see how the State can commit theft or murder in the sense in which these are moral offences. ... The State has no determinate function in a larger community, but is itself the supreme community.' (Bosanquet.) Nor can it do any wrong in internal affairs. 'Mussolini is always right,' is one of the maxims of the Party, whose motto is 'To Believe, To Obey, To Fight.'¹

What, then, of the Church which preaches a divine law superior to all State-made law? An English apologist answers in terms redolent of the Middle Ages: Fascism 'Proclaims God as the supreme sovereign, and the State as God's temporal vicar, responsible to God for the peoples' good government.' Apparently no difficulties of the medieval conflict between Church and State are apprehended because Fascism virtually identifies itself with Christianity. The State, says Mussolini, 'professes no Theology, but a morality, and in the Fascist State religion is considered as one of the deepest manifestations of men, thus it is not only respected but defended and protected.' It is true that Mussolini has remained on excellent terms with the Papacy since the Concordat of 1929; but what usually happens may be seen in the battle being waged by the Catholic and Protestant Churches in Germany against the attempts of the State to dictate to the consciences of the faithful. Extreme Nazis have indeed attempted to form a State church in the German Christian movement; other racial enthusiasts prefer to worship Wotan rather than Christ as the true German god.

¹ Cf., Goering: 'From now on I demand from everybody, no matter who he is, that he devote his entire self to the authority of the National-Socialist State. In the future there is to be only one authority, that of the State.' And Hitler: 'We command the State. The Leader is the Party and the Party is the Leader.'

Fascism is the exact opposite of Democracy. The democrat contradicts every step in the argument outlined above. Firstly, as Professor Hobhouse says, 'political freedom does not consist in likemindedness, but in the toleration of differences; or, positively, in the acceptance of differences as contributing to richer life than uniformity.' Next, it is simply a misuse of words to identify the State with society and to say that only the will of the State represents the will of society. To say so is to confuse what *is* with what *should* be. In actual fact there is not one will but many wills, and only the individual can decide which is right and which is wrong. To refuse the expression of any alternatives stifles criticism and therefore progress. The Fascist argument amounts to no more than Pope's conservatism:

'Whatever is, is right.'

Fascism rejects Democracy as a system of government and as a creed. It replaces the principle of the Greatest Happiness of the individual with the ideal of the welfare of the State. 'Liberalism denied the State in the interest of the particular individual; Fascism re-affirms the State as the true reality of the individual.' Liberty is interpreted thus: 'The Fascist State organizes the nation, but thus leaves sufficient margins to individuals; it has limited the useless and noxious liberties and has conserved the essential ones. The judge of such things cannot be the individual but only the State.' (Mussolini.)

Similarly equality, and consequently the rule of the majority, is denied—Fascism 'denies that numbers alone can govern by means of periodical consultation, and it affirms the immutable, beneficial and fruitful inequality of mankind.' Yet, paradoxically, a great

benefit of Fascism is that it has obliterated class distinctions.

The principle of Equality is replaced by the principle of Leadership. Readers of Carlyle, Nietzsche and other opponents of nineteenth-century Democracy will be familiar with this worship of the Superman. 'Worship of a Hero is transcendent admiration of a Great Man,' cries Carlyle; 'no nobler feeling than this of admiration for one higher than himself dwells in the breast of man.... Society is founded on Hero Worship.'¹ The pattern of Democracy is that of a pyramid standing on the broad base of universal suffrage; the pattern of Dictatorship is that of a pyramid balanced on its apex. Quite logically this principle of leadership is applied to every social organization. In industry, for example, the employer is called in the German Labour Code, 'the leader of the factory,' and the workers are his 'followers'; 'the decision of the leader of the factory is binding on his followers in all factory matters.'

It is easy to understand the hatred the Communist feels for the Fascist. According to him the political and nationalist beliefs of Fascism are nothing but a smoke-screen to hide the real character of the régime 'as the terrorist dictatorship of Finance Capital.' From his point of view Fascism is Capitalism at its last gasp; not so much Capitalism in decay as Capitalism fighting for its life. Who are the men who fostered Fascism with financial support? Those capitalists who feared the advance of Communism. Who makes most out of the régime once it is in power? Those same magnates—Pirelli the rubber king, von Thyssen of the Ruhr Steel Trust, Krupps the armament manufacturer. The real villains of the piece are, of course, the Social-

¹ See *Heroes and Hero Worship*, and *Shooting Niagara*, 1867.

Democrats who split the working-class front and made the way clear for Fascism. As a matter of fact National-Socialism, as its name implies, may prove a two-edged tool to its capitalist supporters. It dissolves all working-class organizations; but it also limits the initiative of the employers. Both the Italian and German Labour Codes are definitely capitalist documents, yet even here the subservience of industry to the welfare of the State is stressed. 'The Corporate State considers that private initiative in the field of production is the most efficacious and most useful instrument in the interests of the nation.' On the other hand the State's duty, says Hitler, is 'to see that capital remains the servant of the nation.' But, it will be asked, how is it possible to permit private profit and at the same time limit it? That may well prove a serious weakness in the stability of the regime. Already it is said that the bigger Italian employers are antagonistic to the power they have created.

The danger of Fascism in the field of world politics is obvious. A spirit of militant Nationalism cannot fail to disturb international harmony. 'Fascism believes neither in the possibility nor the utility of perpetual peace,' says Mussolini; 'war alone brings up to its highest tension all human energy and puts the stamp of nobility upon the people who have the courage to meet it.' 'In eternal warfare mankind has become great,' echoes Hitler, 'in eternal peace mankind would be ruined.' Hence the aim of building a Roman Empire in the Mediterranean; hence Hitler's famous definition of the aims of German policy: 'We stem the Germanic stream toward the South and West of Europe, and turn our eyes Eastward. We have finished with our pre-war policy of colonies and trade, and are going over to the

land policy of the future. Fate itself seems to wish to give us our direction.'

In the essentials of political theory there is little difference between German and Italian Fascism. In both the State is pre-eminent; the offices of Duce and Führer illustrate the principle of leadership; in both the Party is an élite of devoted followers who leaven the bulk of the nation with their enthusiasm; Parliament and Reichstag have ceased to be anything more than advisory bodies;¹ above all, both rule by Propaganda. Both have Ministries of Propaganda which do not merely block opinion by censorship but manufacture it by the repetition of slogans. In an unfortunate passage subsequently deleted from his book Hitler once said: 'The German has not the slightest idea how a people must be misled if the adherence of the masses is sought.' These methods, it is claimed, unite the nation. Certainly they have given the masses a soul and a god and an *esprit de corps*. The whole nation (with the exception of those in concentration camps and those who find it necessary to bow themselves in the House of Rimmon) is saturated with a new sense of its destiny.

The economic structure of Italy has been re-organized more fundamentally than has that of Germany. This has been in accordance with the ideal of the Corporate state,² which Fascists claim to be their most original contribution to politics. The genesis of the idea is found in Hegel's analysis of society into three classes, defined by their function rather than by wealth or birth—the Agricultural, the Industrial and the Universal or governing class. This truly feudal analysis implies

¹ There is no 'constitution' in the usual sense of the word. Government is largely by decree.

² Sometimes called 'Corporative.' German industry is being developed along the same lines.

that classes are not antagonistic in the Marxian sense, but complementary, each class being recognized by the State as the instrument of its own welfare. This functional idea lies at the very root of the Corporate ideal, in which employers and labourers are to work while the Party members govern. As regards organization the ideas of Syndicalism have been very influential. The syndicalist, it will be remembered, wishes to organize society into a federation of guilds composed, as were those of medieval times, of employers and workers alike. It was thus hoped to eliminate the State altogether as a governing body; but the Corporate ideal makes these guilds or 'corporations' subservient instruments of State policy. As an ideal this would certainly abolish antagonism and create a most satisfactory harmony in the industrial world.

The actual functioning of the Corporate State hardly lives up to this ideal. In 1934 twenty-two Corporations and sixteen Labour Tribunals were set up by law. The aim was that representatives of the workers in any given trade should combine with an equal number of employers to form a Corporation which, in its local, provincial or national meetings, should settle all matters of hours, wages, etc. A controlling Ministry of Corporations binds these together. But since Mussolini is President of this, and since Fascist officials are appointed to every particular body, it is clear that only the 'right' decisions can be taken and the 'right' men appointed to sit as representatives. By dissolving all forms of voluntary trade organizations, by prohibiting strikes and by controlling the nomination of delegates, it is clear that harmony is imposed, rather than evolved, by the Corporate method. In the event of disputes between workers and employers com-

pulsory arbitration by one of the Labour Tribunals is the rule. As in dictatorship states judges are, in Bacon's phrase, Lions under the Throne, decisions can be guaranteed to favour the interests of the State. This is not to imply that judgment is invariably given against the workers' cause; excess profit-making is equally severely prohibited. One further development of the Corporate organization should be mentioned—the *Dopolavoro*, or after-work institution, clubs where facilities for social intercourse and games are given to the working man.

Accurate figures to show how successful this economic policy has been are hard to come by in a country which possesses a Ministry of Propaganda. Both in Italy and Germany the aim has been national self-sufficiency, and much progress has certainly been made in that direction. But objective observers agree that the internal effects of this policy have not been satisfactory. The slump hit Italy as hard as any democratic country. There are twice as many unemployed as in 1920; wages have fallen by at least 10 per cent; budgetary deficits average three milliard lire annually.¹ Fascism, however, is anti-materialist. It despises a civilization whose highest endeavour is to provide a chicken in every pot and two cars in the family garage. It preaches asceticism and self-sacrifice, thus providing a facile excuse for bad government. Gestures like the Abyssinian campaign or the scrapping of the Treaty of Versailles are supposed to provide more satisfaction than a rise in wages. Fascism, says Mussolini, 'disdains the "comfortable" life.'

¹ In Germany the cost of living, excluding increased taxation, rose by 25 per cent between 1933 and 1937. There has been little or no increase in real wages.

The outstanding characteristic of German Fascism is the Aryan race theory. 'For myself and all other true National-Socialists there is only one doctrine: Nation and Fatherland,' says Hitler. Naturally Italians are not sympathetic with a belief in the superiority of a race which is not their own; 'nothing,' says Mussolini, 'will ever make me believe that biologically pure races can be shown to exist to-day.' The fundamental aim of Nazi policy is to ensure the purity of the Aryan race. The following quotations from *My Struggle* show how deeply implanted is this belief:

'By defending myself against the Jews I am doing the Lord's work.... The true National State must make it its duty to develop a suitable system of education for its youth so that it may maintain a race of men prepared for the last and greatest decisions of this world. The first nation to take the road will be the conqueror. The whole character and education of the true National State must find its apex in racial instruction. It must brand the sense of race and the feelings of race in the instincts and the understanding of the hearts and brains of the youth entrusted to it.'

* * * * *

The fallacies of Dictatorship as a permanent system of government are obvious. Even in peace time the whole nation is keyed up to the emotional tension which normally prevails in war time. The strain is bound to tell when a real crisis occurs. In order to maintain this tension the dictator has constantly to provide rewards and gestures to advertise his position. Such a policy leads inevitably to war and in a war a dictator, unlike a democratic government, cannot

afford to make mistakes. A defeat on the field of battle, a Waterloo or a Sedan, is fatal to the maintenance of personal power. Secondly, a dictator is only, as Hobbes called him, 'a mortal god.' In the event of his death the choice of a successor is bound to be an extremely difficult task. Mussolini hopes that the Fascist Grand Council will nominate a successor who will be appointed Chief of the Government by the King. But the jealousy which must separate the higher officials of such States, and the fundamental differences as to the interpretation of the aims of Fascists, bode ill for the future régime.

As a *modus vivendi* in a crisis dictatorship has every justification. Certainly Fascism has united Italy and Germany. It has restored those nations to the status of first-class powers; it has breathed new hope into the souls of the masses of forgotten men; it has united the nation in an unprecedented manner. But it is not a stable form of government, nor is it easy to see how it can ennoble men when it paralyses their initiative and suppresses every form of independent thought and action. The future cultural achievements of these countries will alone decide whether Fascism has created unity or merely uniformity.

Modern Europe is in danger of being divided into two camps, the Red and the Black. Both are dictatorships in method, however antagonistic their fundamental aims may be. Which is the greatest danger to Democracy? As long as the international aspects of Marxism are controlled by Stalin, Fascism remains the greater danger to world peace. Communism implies such a radical transformation of society that a people must be sick indeed before it contemplates so drastic a remedy. On the other hand Fascism, though equally alien to democratic ways of thought, can creep sur-

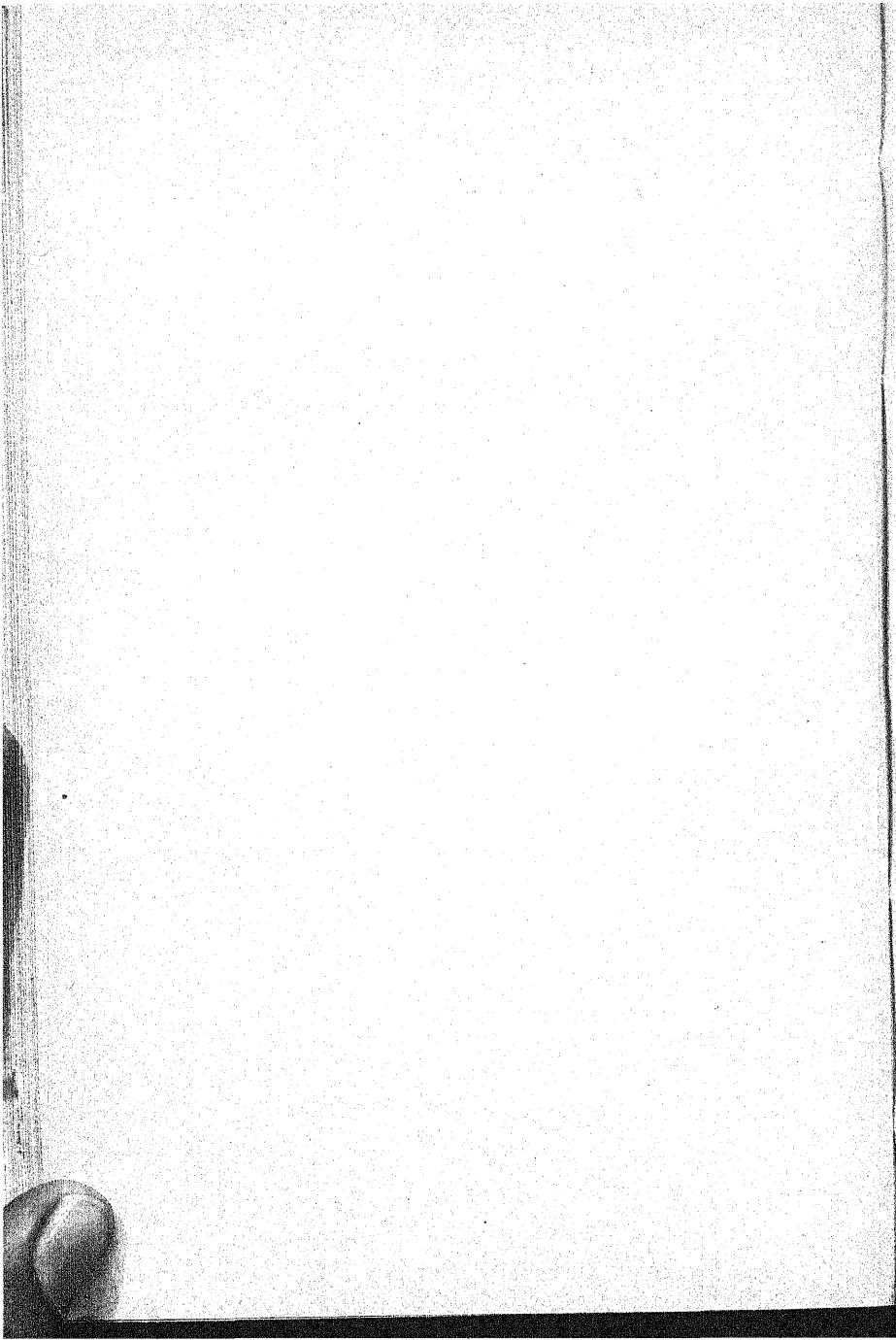
reptitiously into a State. It would be easy enough to transform a flexible constitution like our own to make way for a velvet-glove form of Fascism under the pretext of the necessity of a strong hand at the helm.

In his last speech before retirement Lord Baldwin defined the faith of the British Empire in the following words:

'It is an Empire organized for peace and for the free development of the individual in and through an infinite variety of voluntary associations. It defies neither the State nor its rulers. The old doctrine of the divine right of kings has gone, but we have no intention of erecting in its place a new doctrine of the divine right of States. No State that ever was is worthy of a free man's worship.... The fruits of the free spirit of man do not grow in the garden of tyranny. It has been well said that slavery is a weed that grows in every soil. As long as we have the wisdom to keep the sovereign authority of this country as the sanctuary of liberty, the sacred temple consecrated to our common faith, men will turn their faces towards us and draw their breath more freely.'

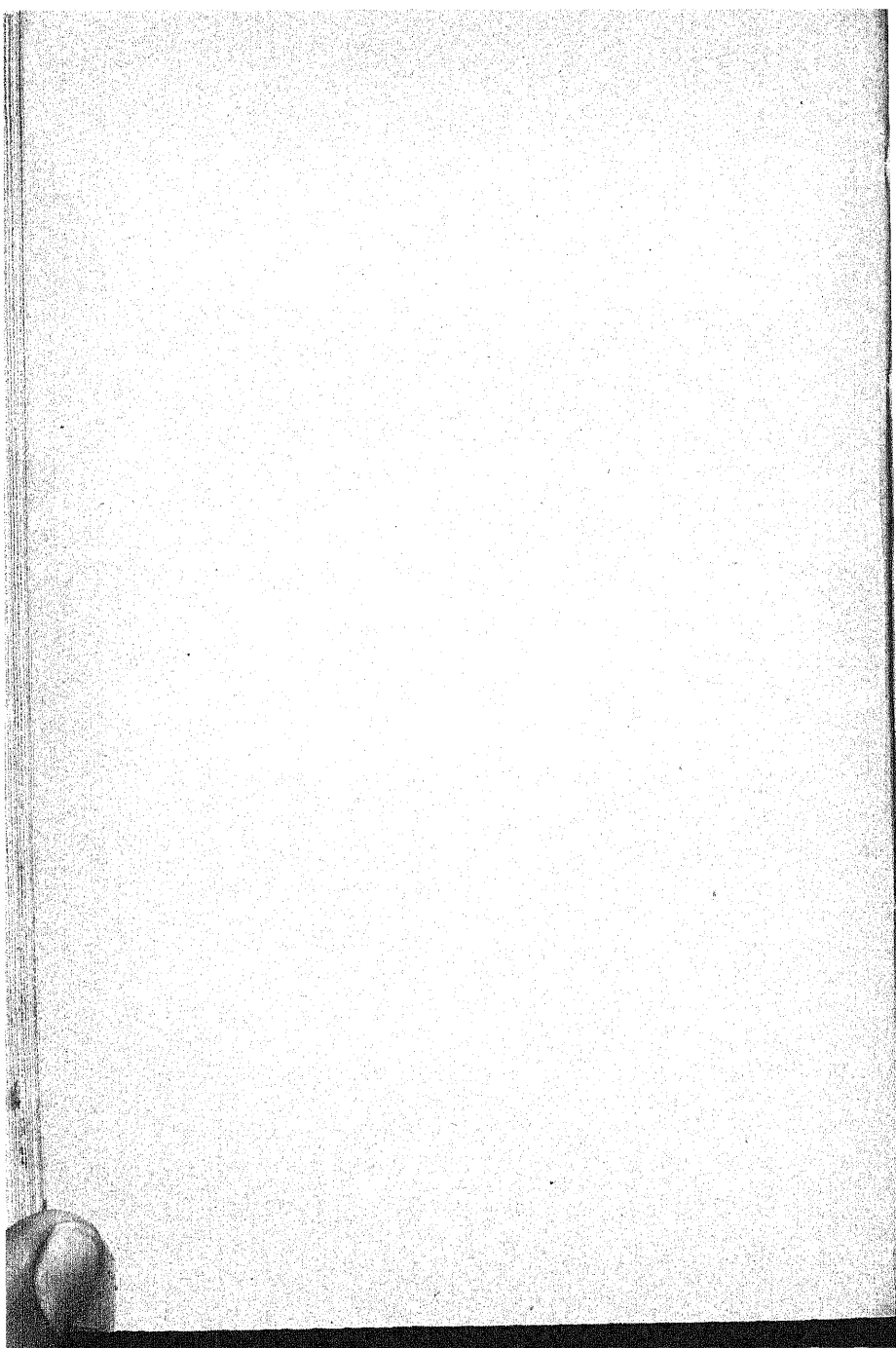
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PART IV

THE MEANING OF HISTORY



I

THE IDEA OF PROGRESS

IT is as well at this point to try and see the political systems of to-day in the perspective of world history. A somewhat parochial attitude to such matters is one of the defects of much historical teaching. Given a spell of prosperity, people are only too apt to regard, say, Great Britain in the year of Our Lord 1940 as a State enjoying the acme of civilization. But what is civilization? Or, to put the question another way, what is the meaning of the process called human history? Does an examination of the facts warrant the belief that Man progresses from a state of superstitious savagery to that of a virtuous superman, lord of his fate and master of the world? Is Utopia really at the rainbow's end?

In modern times our knowledge of the past has become more detailed and more extensive as new facts have come to light. We may be in a better position to answer such questions, but, as yet, even the scholar himself is not equipped with reasonably accurate standards of comparison. One thing has certainly been gained by these researches: the popular conception of history has immensely widened. No longer is it regarded as the story of kings and battles, '1066 and All That'; increasing emphasis has been laid on the social, literary, scientific aspects and their inter-connection. The text-books still inform us that Modern History began in 1485, or was it 1453? But a moment's thought convinces us that such dates are merely

arbitrary landmarks in the ceaseless flux of human development.

Before any generalization can be made about the course of History it is well to bear in mind such measurements as those given by Sir James Jeans:

'Take a postage-stamp, and stick it on to a penny. Now climb Cleopatra's Needle and lay the penny flat, postage-stamp uppermost, on the top of the obelisk. The height of the whole structure may be taken to represent the time that has elapsed since the Earth was born. On this scale, the thickness of the penny and the postage-stamp together represent the time that Man has lived on Earth. The thickness of the postage-stamp represents the time he has been civilized, the thickness of the penny representing the time he lived in an uncivilized state.'

Such thoughts make us feel pretty small. Nevertheless the busy mind of man is always evolving theories to interpret the historical process. We have already considered one such conception: Marx's Materialist Interpretation of history. The true historian, the purist will say, is not interested in such hypotheses: it is his business to narrate what happened, not to draw conclusions. Such an objection fails to appreciate the distinction between History and Chronicle. The historian is a hybrid between a scientist who discovers and records the facts, and an artist who arranges and interprets them. As an artist he seeks to find a pattern in the carpet. Arrangement of any kind implies method. As soon as he begins to write his narrative, the very exigencies of style distort the raw material at his disposal. The pure archæologist ought not to have, nor indeed often has, any literary pretensions; but an historian like Macaulay, who commands a wider public

as the possessor of a distinctive style, distorts the facts in deference to the requirements of neat antitheses or resounding periods.

Everyone who writes about the past has his own prejudices. If he is a chronicler or a research worker such prejudices need find little expression. But once he begins to generalize he ceases to be a recorder and becomes in some sense a philosopher, seeking Meaning or Truth. In an age of relativity it is easy to understand that there is not one truth, but as many as there are ages in which historians have written. There is no such thing as 'pure' history.

The formulation of scientific laws of history is not to be expected, because history deals with a fluid, intangible, human element. What actually happened may indeed be discovered; but what precisely the facts mean and what light they throw on the future can never be determined with precise accuracy. It is true that the Materialist conception of history is one such attempt to discover 'laws' of development; other attempts have also been made which it is our business to summarize in these pages. But one fact stands out clearly: the same things have different meanings in different ages. Every age sees History in its own image. It is a natural, if reprehensible, function of the human mind to read history backwards, to interpret the facts as leading up to the particular stage in which the historian is living. Macaulay the Whig wrote history with a parliamentary bias; Marx the Communist saw everything as a preparation for the rule of the working classes; the Christian historian views history as the working out of God's spirit on earth:

'God is working his purpose out
As year succeeds to year';

the rationalist sees it as the progressive emancipation of the human reason.

Froude used to compare the facts of history to a child's alphabet of cardboard letters which could be arranged to spell anything. The most influential historians, Taine, Treitschke, Macaulay, have in some sense written with a bias. There have been scientific historians, Ranke or Stubbs, but their influence has not been so wide, though they indeed may be called the ideal historians. Of Ranke, the German who wrote the history of France, the Protestant who wrote the Lives of the Popes, Acton has said that he taught the study of history 'to be critical, to be colourless, and to be new.' Lord Acton himself, the greatest of English historians, found a key to history: 'We have no thread through the enormous intricacy of modern politics except the idea of progress towards more perfect and assured freedom and the divine right of free men.'

A more contemporary view is that expressed by the Right Hon. H. A. L. Fisher in his masterly survey of European history:

'Men wiser and more learned than I have discerned in history a plot, a rhythm, a predetermined pattern. These harmonies are concealed from me. I can see only one emergency following upon another as wave follows upon wave, only one great fact with respect to which, since it is unique, there can be no generalizations, only one safe rule for the historian: that he should recognize in the development of human destinies the play of the contingent and the unforeseen. This is not a doctrine of cynicism and despair. The fact of progress is written plain and large on the page of history; but progress is not a law of nature. The ground gained by one generation

may be lost by the next. The thoughts of men may flow into the channels which lead to disaster and barbarism.'

With such views about the past we are concerned in this section. To some the reader may give whole-hearted assent; some he will reject; at all events a summary of them may serve as an introduction to the study of historical method.

* * * * *

The idea of Progress and of Evolution is an essential part of our mental equipment, even if recent events have undermined the implicit faith with which our forefathers regarded it. It is impossible to deny the fact of Progress; but it is essential that the popular interpretation of the term should be more carefully defined. The question we have to ask ourselves is this: In what sense is Progress a fact? Or is it only a figment of man's imagination, a carrot hung in front of the donkey's nose to lure him ever onward?

The fact which must be most startling to those who have not studied the history of the idea is its modernity; it is not much more than two hundred years old. Is it then a law of nature recently discovered, or is it a mere hypothesis which has gained currency as an explanation of certain developments in our own civilization?

The idea is not an easy one to define because the word 'progress' has changed its meaning. The Oxford Dictionary defines it as 'the action of moving forward'—not necessarily in a desirable direction, though this secondary meaning is invariably attached to it to-day. When Queen Elizabeth 'made a progress' she simply moved from place to place; when we say a nation 'makes progress' we imply that it has somehow

improved. There is therefore a distinction between Progress and Change. It may be said that the modern idea of Progress includes a conception of the growth of civilization during the past and a suggestion of a similar 'upward' development on the part of the human race in the future. Can that development cease and a state of perfection exist? If Progress is a condition of civilization, what happens when growth comes to fruition? This difficulty will become apparent when we examine the views of writers imbued with the idea of Progress, such as Comte or Marx.

It is essentially a 'humanist' idea, because it regards the amelioration of man's lot as due to his *own* efforts. The orthodox Catholic view of history is therefore at the opposite pole, for it requires God to redeem us from the taint of original sin. In the Papal Syllabus of 1864 the final error declared to be anathema is that 'the Roman Pontiff can, and ought to be reconciled and come to terms with Progress, with Liberalism, and with Modern Civilization.' Indeed, until there were visual proofs of the reality of Progress, such as the last century witnessed, and a detailed knowledge of the past to serve as a standard of comparison, it would be ridiculous to suppose that the man in the street would ever entertain such an idea as that of Progress. This suggests a truth which is evident in the history of all ideas: it does not matter who first entertains an opinion; what matters are the conditions which make it possible for that opinion to take root as a popular dogma.

Neither of the conditions necessary for a belief in Progress is to be found in primitive societies. All of them (even the Jew, the Greek and the Roman) put their Golden Age in the past, not in the future. Nor did the Christian, until the seventeenth century, regard

himself as anything but a degenerate descendant of the angels of the dawn of the world. The Fall of Man is not a specifically Christian idea: it was common to most of the peoples of the ancient world. But very late in Roman thought the idea of Progress is put forward in a truncated form as applied to the growth of knowledge, not to the general evolution of mankind. In this sense Lucretius¹ gives us the word itself. Seneca,² with singular prescience, says: 'One day posterity will marvel at our ignorance of causes so clear to them. Many discoveries are reserved for future ages, when our memory will have faded from men's minds. We imagine ourselves initiated in the secrets of nature; we are standing on the threshold of her temple.'

It would be impossible to find so intelligent a view in the Middle Ages. The accepted attitude during that period was that man's life here on earth was but a pilgrimage between two eternities. Individual betterment there might be, but not social. Not until the doctrines of Original Sin and Predestination went out of favour was it possible to believe in human progress.³ Bede tells how a Saxon noble compared the life of man to the flight of a sparrow through a banquet hall. 'For the time he is indoors the bird is sheltered from the storm, but after this short while of calm he flies out again into the cold and is seen no more. Thus the life of man is visible for a moment, but we know not what comes before it or follows after it.' The pagan is speaking here, without hope or fear. If, he continues, referring to the Christianity he wishes to see introduced, 'if this new doctrine brings something more of certainty,

¹ Lucretius died B.C. 55. Author of *De Rerum Naturae*.

² Seneca died A.D. 65. A Stoic philosopher.

³ It may be observed that something like these views has reappeared in scientific guise in the laws of heredity.

it deserves to be followed.' Christianity provided men with that certainty, but it gave them a gloomy picture of man's life here on earth. Chaucer's words are typically medieval:

'Here is non hoom, here nis but wilderness:
Forth, pilgrim, forth! Forth, beste, out of thy stall!
Know thy contree, look up, thank God of al.'

Sublimely self-confident as were the humanists of the Renaissance, they did not reach the idea of progress. They were too busy discovering the past and trying to emulate the standards set by the Romans to feel that they had done better. In the arts the tyranny of Rome, the reign of classical models, lasted till the new Romantic style developed. Works of art were admired in so far as they rivalled the ancients. It is surprising to find such lusty spirits as the Italian painters or the Elizabethan poets confessing their inferiority in this way. John Donne, who of all poets was sympathetic with 'the new philosophie,' confesses that 'we may admit usefully (though we do not conclude peremptorily) this observation to be true, that there is a reproof, a rebuke in it, a sensible decay and mortality of the whole world.'

Before it was possible to dream of a golden future it was necessary to dispel the gloom cast by traditions of the great achievements of the past. This was the work of the critical school who founded their views on Bacon¹ and Descartes.² From the mountain height of his great intellect Bacon was the first to perceive the uses of science for the betterment of man's situation. But his attitude was still that of his age: he only suggested that

¹ Author of *Essays*, 1597: *Novum Organum*, 1620.

² Author of *Discourse on Method*, 1641.

this, 'the old age of humanity,' might be made a little more comfortable. His *New Atlantis*, like More's *Utopia*, is a legislator's toy, a dream without foundation in the evolution of the past. Descartes continued to clear the jungle of tradition by making everything submit to the test of reason. His philosophy has been called a Declaration of the Rights of Man, the right of man to be free of the bonds of supernatural beliefs. In his view Science will make us 'masters and possessors of nature.'

The weeds were cleared away and the soil was now suitable for the growth of the new idea. The watershed between the old and the new mode of thought was a literary battle between the Ancients and the Moderns fought in the French Academy in the last year of the reign of Louis XIV. Perrault, known to-day as the author of pretty fairy tales, with the glories of the reign of *Le Roi Soleil* to encourage him, had the audacity to suggest that Homer sometimes nods. How much better would Homer have written had he lived to-day! The idea of Homer in a wig suggests that Perrault was not what is called a historically minded person; indeed he was little more than a cheerful optimist who was convinced he was sitting on top of the world. Though he was the first to view the past as progress towards the present, he had no vision of the future because he was too pleased with himself: 'Our age has, in some sort, arrived at the summit of perfection.... It is pleasant to think that probably there are not many things for which we need envy future generations.'

This complacency was necessary to breed the confidence in human achievement without which the idea of Progress would never have been born. The visible advances in civilization made men sympathetic to the

new idea. 'In these last hundred years almost a new nature has been revealed to us,' wrote Dryden in 1668, 'more errors of the schools have been detected, more useful experiments in philosophy have been made, more noble secrets in optics, medicine, anatomy and astronomy have been discovered than in all these doting and credulous ages from Aristotle to us.' In France, in particular, the spread of the new culture undermined the traditions of the Church. Thus it was that the eighteenth-century philosophers who spread the new ideas found themselves in opposition to the Church: to a man like Voltaire, 'progress' meant freedom from religious oppression.

It is to these *philosophes* of the Age of Enlightenment, that we owe the genesis of the idea itself. Bernardin de St. Pierre, brimful of optimistic projects, was the first to reverse the Golden Age from a dim and distant position in the past to a near and comforting place in the future. For this cheerful *abbé* peace and prosperity were, indeed, just around the corner. Voltaire, a weightier intellect, undertook to prove it in his epoch-making attempt at universal history, *L'Essai Sur Les Moeurs et L'Esprit des Nations* (1756). His aim, he says, is to show 'by what stages mankind from the barbaric rusticity of former days, attained the politeness of our own.' This is the first attempt at anything like the modern method of social history, with kings and battles relegated to their proper place, and including material (quite inaccurate) about the Far East. His collaborators in that great monument of French culture in the eighteenth century, the *Encyclopædia*, pressed forward with ringing claims for the perfectibility of man.

The man who may be regarded as the martyr with

whose blood the triumph of the theory was finally sealed was the Marquis de Condorcet. A warrant was issued for his arrest because he had attacked the Jacobins; he took refuge in a garret and while in hiding began his *Sketch of an Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind*. The work was interrupted by his arrest in 1794. The next day he was found dead by his gaoler; he had committed suicide by taking poison. He was a true martyr to his faith, for he wrote under the shadow of death in circumstances which would have made a weaker man surrender any hopes he might have entertained about the human species. Yet Condorcet died painting a picture 'of the human race, freed from its chains, and marching with a firm tread on the road of truth and virtue and happiness.' Naturally his *Sketch* is inaccurate and his faith in the supremacy of Reason shared the shortcomings of his century. But his ideas were sensible and courageous. He stressed above all the necessity of free and equal education. Universal education, in his view, marked the transition from the IXth to the Xth period of human progress, of which the Revolution was the sign. Men must now recognize 'that all men have an equal right to inform themselves about their own interests, to know the truth, and that no power established by themselves has the right to hide anything from anybody.' Once free education is established 'that time will come when the sun will shine only on an earth inhabited by free men, recognizing no other master but their own Reason'; a time when 'our interests and our passions will have no more influence on our wills than they have at the present time on our scientific opinions.'

There were still those who thought Condorcet unjustifiably optimistic, notably Malthus with his

gloomy view of the results of over-population.¹ But two revolutions immeasurably strengthened the theory in the conviction of which Condorcet died: the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. A symbolic action like the capture of the Bastille proved that the shackles of the past were broken and a free humanity was stepping across the threshold of the dawn. The Romantic poets are full of this conviction:

‘Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven!’

It was an intoxicating theory. But close on the heels of the Declaration of the Rights of Man in America and in France came the Terror, the new despotism and the soul-breaking reaction after Waterloo. Nevertheless, the nineteenth century saw the growth of the seeds planted by the Revolution and by the end it seemed that political and national freedom might soon be assured to every man in the Old World and the New.

The implications of the other revolution passed almost unnoticed until it had created a new society. Then, in the 'forties and 'fifties, the facts of progress burst upon an astonished world. Rivers were spanned, artificial light turned night into day, the mines gave up their riches and the elements were harnessed to the use of Man. In *Locksley Hall* (1841) the idea of past and future progress is expressed with unquestionable conviction. Optimistic tracts tracing the March of Mind, the emancipation of the slaves, the comparison of European nations with those 'uncivilized' peoples with whom the average man now came into contact—all proved the doctrine of perfectibility up to the hilt.

¹ Malthus, an English clergyman of the time of Napoleon, held that the increase of population was bound to outrun available food supply.

At the same time the Romantic revolution in the arts encouraged a backward glance over the centuries so despised in the preceding age. The result was that for the first time men became historically conscious. This sense of the past is seen most clearly in Burke, who made it the basis of his doctrine of the continuity and evolution of society. History, says Kant,¹ in a similar vein, provides 'a consolatory prospect into futurity, in which at a remote distance we shall discover the human species seated upon an eminence won by infinite toil, where all the germs are unfolded which nature has implanted and its own destination upon this earth accomplished.' Nineteenth-century philosophers and historians made this suggestion a certainty.

Belief in Progress was further strengthened by the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859. Darwin's own hypothesis is strictly negative: he does not say whether the end is good or bad. But in the popular view it was sufficient to have proved that man had evolved from the ape to warrant a faith in his ultimately reaching an almost god-like state. A Greek might have murmured something about *hubris*, the overweening self-confidence which invites destruction, but scientists like Spencer had no doubt about the perfectibility of man. 'The ultimate development of the ideal man is logically certain—as certain as any conclusion in which we place the most implicit faith; for instance, that all men will die.' Huxley was not quite so optimistic; he admitted that the future looked rosy compared with the past, 'even so the best of modern civilization appears to me to exhibit a condition of mankind which neither embodies any worthy

¹ The German philosopher who wrote *The Critique of Pure Reason*, 1781.

ideal or even possesses the merit of stability.' But when he spoke like this—which was not often—people refused to listen to him.

As soon as the idea was accepted men, as was natural in a scientific age, set about discovering the Law of Progress. Spencer defined it in 1857 thus: 'Endless facts go to show that every kind of progress is from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous; and that it is so because each change is followed by many changes.' He worked this out in every sphere of life; but an even more extensive effort was made by Comte, the founder of Positivism or the Religion of Progress. Comte distinguishes three main stages of development—the theological (ending about A.D. 1400), the metaphysical (just ending when he wrote in 1842), and the scientific. He developed the now familiar view that each generation and each nation carried on the torch from its predecessors, though he was forced to admit that progress in ethics and the social sciences seemed to lag behind the advance made in physical science. Whether the scientific age was to last for ever Comte never considered.

* * * * *

If this was the faith of 1900, why do men talk in a much more pessimistic way thirty years later? The experience of a war of such magnitude that the very foundations of society were shaken may be one explanation. We have also seen the birth of a new science, psychology, which has shaken the doctrine of the supremacy of Reason, the foundation of the whole theory of Progress. It is now realized that factors such as heredity or environment or instinct count for much more in the direction of human affairs than does the

abstract intelligence. Finally, a wider view of History has resulted in saner standards of comparison between one civilization and another. Long ago Disraeli complained that 'the European talks of progress because by the aid of a few scientific discoveries he has established a society which has mistaken comfort for civilization.' Many to-day admit the truth of that remark and add that even comfort is not assured in the modern world for long. At the beginning of the last century Shelley's wife wrote a tale in which an eccentric scientist called Frankenstein created a robot monster. The popularity of that story to-day is not only because of its gruesome quality, but because it is realized that here is a fable which expresses the modern dilemma: Man versus the Machine, which he himself has created and which threatens to destroy him.

One of the many signs of revolt against the religion of Progress was a lecture by Dean Inge in 1920. After testing its truth by various standards of comparison he came to this conclusion: 'neither science nor history gives us any warrant for believing that humanity has advanced, except by accumulating knowledge and experience and the instruments of living.'

Some standards by which Progress may be measured may be suggested. Has there been any progress in the physical condition of men? Medicine has made our lives longer and safer, but it cannot be said to have improved our physique. Have we the intellectual ability of the Greeks? Education has increased the number of people who can read and write, but it would be hard to find the equal of Socrates' critical ability, Aristotle's intellect or Sophocles' imagination. Even within our own civilization, compare the proportion of genius to the number of people in Queen Anne's reign

and at the present time. In art he will be a curious critic who says that the Surrealists have 'improved' on the painters of the age of Leonardo. They are different: that is all one can say about them. With the Industrial Revolution an unprecedented decline in popular art occurred. We are beginning to recover from it; but, though a wider taste for art may have been diffused, the popular standard is still distressingly low in comparison with that of other centuries. In the field of scientific invention our civilization stands supreme: but look at the use to which we put these inventions! Some advance has been made in the moral sphere: we are more sensitive to cruelty than our ancestors; but when the old temptations occur man falls as readily as he did in the old days. Indeed, some things which were accounted sins in medieval times—avarice, usury, 'forestalling and regrating'—are accounted positive virtues in some quarters to-day. It is of course quite impossible to say whether the average of mankind was happier or better in one age than in another. But some belief in moral progress is essential; it is the essence of hope and ambition, and the very process of stretching forward to better forms of life is in itself a moral act.

The truth is that the span of human civilization is so short that it is impossible to find satisfactory standards of comparison. Evolution, the biological aspect of Progress, is an undeniable fact. From a study of it we can see that Progress is not by any means a universal or inevitable law: the degenerate, the unsuitable, will die out in favour of the more adaptable species. It might be possible to speed up this process by the practice of Eugenics, for example. Possibly we may raise the average, certainly we shall never be able to

breed the 'sport' called genius. The anthropologist supports the biologist in claiming that Progress has occurred in human history. Thus Sir James Frazer compares history to the ever-growing trunk of a tree which has many branches, or race civilizations.

'As in the evolution of the bodily form we know that many species of lower orders have survived side by side with the higher to our day, so in the evolution of the mind we may infer that many of the existing races of mankind have lagged behind us, and that their various degrees of mental development represent the various degrees of retardation in the evolutionary process, various stages in the upward march of humanity. I say the upward march, because we have good reason to believe that most, if not all, of these laggard races are steadily, though very slowly, advancing; or at least that they were so till they came, for their misfortune, into fatal contact with European civilization.'

The idea of Progress must not therefore be dismissed altogether. To do so would be to deny hope for the future. There remains a *chance*, not a certainty, as Comte would have us believe, of human amelioration in the future. But the word 'progress' must be limited to the products of the human will-power; it is not applicable to manifestations of the spirit, like religion or the arts. There are some things, e.g. the abolition of poverty, which might possibly be done if everybody really wished to do them; others, like writing poetry, depend on inspiration, not on will-power. Never before were the conditions for the Good Life better than at present. But there remain many barriers to surmount. If the ideals men set before them are false, then decline through internecine conflict is certain. Provided we do

not let science 'improve' us out of existence; that we do not accept Progress as inevitable, thereby enfeebling the will to realize it; that we realize our own limitations and respect the independence of our neighbours on this planet—then Progress is assured.

Is this a vain hope?

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II

CIVILIZATION OR CIVILIZATIONS?

THE idea of Progress implies the view that all civilization is to be considered as one continuous whole. Each age and culture is regarded as stepping into the shoes of the last and passing on the torch to its successor. Events such as the Barbarian Invasions are regarded as momentary pauses in the unrolling of the scroll of History. Civilization, according to this view, develops in a straight line from start to finish, from *Homo Pithecanthropus* to Einstein.

But about this matter there is considerable difference of opinion among archæologists. The simplest theory of the origin and growth of Civilization is that which regards it as having a single source from which it was diffused by traders and travellers unto the uttermost parts of the earth. 'All epochs,' wrote Turgot in 1750 in developing the idea of Progress, 'are fastened together by a sequence of causes and effects, linking the condition of the world to all the conditions that have gone before it.' Professor Elliot Smith is the chief representative of this view to-day. In his opinion, as a result of a happy combination of circumstances, Civilization began in Upper Egypt about the year 4000 B.C. with the transition of Man from a food-hunting, nomadic stage, to a food-producing, agricultural stage. From Egypt civilizing influences spread east to Sumer and the Euphrates valley; thence to China and India; ultimately to America, where they blossomed

anew in the Aztec and Mayan cultures of A.D. 600-1200.

It would be impossible for an amateur to pronounce on the evidence for this 'Diffusionist' theory. Toynbee, whose view we are shortly to examine, says: 'We have found no evidence that any living civilization is in any way related to the Egyptiac.' And certainly researches at Ur of the Chaldees prove that Egypt learned the arts of working in metal from the Sumerians, and not *vice-versa*.

The majority of archæologists, who favour a multiple origin of civilization, disagree with Professor Elliot Smith. Similarities in customs and beliefs—e.g., ubiquitous stories of the Flood or the Slain King—in every part of the world are admitted; but the even more numerous dissimilarities and the apparently essential differences between cultures lead those who favour the multiple view to believe that civilizations evolve in some degree independently of each other. Cases of transmission and degrees of relatedness make it impossible to generalize about the facts; but, as Sir James Frazer says in *The Golden Bough*: 'If there is one general conclusion which seems to emerge from the mass of particulars, I venture to think that it is the essential similarity in the working of the less developed human mind among all races.' And elsewhere, 'many of these resemblances are to be explained by simple transmission, with more or less modification, from people to people, and many are to be explained as having originated independently through the similar action of the human mind in response to similar environment.'

The idea of Progress favours the view that there is a continuity of one civilization; the views we are now to

consider regard History as consisting of many civilizations. If the straight line theory is rejected, one alternative is a belief in a series of curves or cycles. There are not many expressions of this view in European thought. But Aristotle, Plato and Machiavelli believed in it, and it is clearly expressed in Shelley's famous chorus:

'The world's great age begins anew,
The golden years return,
The earth doth like a snake renew
Her winter weeds outworn.'

Being a thorough Platonist, Shelley expresses the idea of a return of the last Golden Age of the reign of Saturn. But in the last verse, as in the conclusion of *Prometheus Unbound*, a modern uncertainty suddenly breaks through:

'O cease! must hate and death return?
Cease! must men kill and die?
Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn
Of bitter prophecy.
The world is weary of the past,
Oh, might it die or rest at last!'

In recent times an attitude which appreciates a variety of civilizations has won more favour, chiefly because of the extension of our knowledge by the discoveries in Egypt, Knossos, Ur and elsewhere, whereby forgotten cultures such as the Minoan, Sumerian, Aztec, Indus, have been rediscovered. Without considering Archbishop Usher's conjectural dates as printed in the Bible,¹ a generation ago the first date known with certainty was 776 B.C., the date of the

¹ He calculated that Man was created 9.0 a.m. on 23 October, 4004 B.C.

first Olympic Games. Now we know that there was a total eclipse of the sun at Ur at 11 a.m. on March 8th, 2283 B.C., and we can calculate the date of the Mesopotamian Flood at about 5500 B.C.

The advance made by archæology has thus made it possible to develop a different view of the past. The two most important interpretations of History from a new, comparative point of view—Spengler's and Toynbee's—have found much sympathy amongst those who are dissatisfied with the idea of Progress in its old form.

In 1918 a German professor, Oswald Spengler, published a monument of erudition called *The Decline of the West*. The book was completed before the War (which he foresaw), but it was not translated into English till 1926. It achieved enormous popularity throughout Europe, in spite of the fact that it is a very difficult book to read. The style is heavy and obscure; the author is almost perverse in the particular connotations with which he uses words, and his worship of force at the expense of intellect is often nauseating. On the other hand his theory is extremely original and illuminating, and his incredible erudition makes it dangerous to quarrel with him.

His main thesis, if we may be allowed thus to summarize a thousand pages, is that there can be discerned in History a series of Cultures (to use his particular word) which rise and decline impelled by unalterable Destiny. He frequently uses the symbol of the life of a plant or a tree, or the cycle of the seasons, to illustrate his meaning. Just as these natural phenomena are determined by Fate or Destiny, so the equally predestined phenomena of History can be compared. Accident, or the influence of personality on the development of events, is out of the question: Destiny marks

out separate paths for each culture which must be followed to the end. He proceeds to compare in detail such phenomena as the Egyptian, Chinese, Apollinian (Greece and Rome), Magian (Arabian) and Faustian (Western) cultures. To show that each culture has its own distinct life he has recourse to symbols. The Apollinian man, for example, has his mind set on the physical, exterior world; it is not by chance but by necessity that his artistic expression finds outlet in the Column and the Statue. The Faustian is more of an introvert; his mind stretches out to the idea of Time and Space; his typical means of expression are the Pointed Arch, the stained-glass window, landscape painting, the science of light and shade to give effect of distance; above all, instrumental music. In fact, in the language of literary criticism, he is a Romantic and the Apollinian a Classic.

From such comparisons a morphology, or science of comparative history, is built up. No culture is admitted to borrow anything intrinsic from another: the debts, for example, those of the Renaissance to ancient Rome, were formal and superficial and rapidly converted to the needs of the borrower. There are no inherited conquests in science or art; each culture makes its own independently. The Chinese invent gunpowder and use it for fire-works; the European discovers it at a later date chronologically, but at the same comparative stage, and uses it for warfare.

Once this independence of culture is admitted a cyclical view of history is easy to understand.

'I see history as a picture of endless formations and transformations, of the marvellous waxing and waning of organic forms. The professional historian,

on the contrary, sees it as a sort of tapeworm industriously adding on to itself one epoch after another. . . . The future of the West is not a limitless tending upwards and onwards for all time towards our present ideals, but as a single phenomenon of history, strictly limited as to form and duration, which covers a few centuries and can be viewed, and, in essentials, calculated from available precedents.'

The various stages in the life of each culture can therefore be distinguished. First there is the Feudal or Epic stage of Spring, characterized by myth and legend (Homer and Beowulf; Lives of the Gods and Lives of the Saints). Next, in Summer, appears the Dynastic state, the growth of city states and great powers and the rise of critical thinking. In the early Autumn the Nation states make their appearance and develop into Empires. This period marks the zenith of intellectual creativeness (Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Encyclopædists, Kant, Goethe). From this situation society soon declines; the cults of Utility, Money, Disillusion, flourish (Cynics; Ibsen, Shaw). At this stage Culture, Spengler's term for the creative period, passes into Civilization, a petrification of past achievements. Rival Empires introduce a period of bloody warfare, known in China as the period of the Warring States (1600 B.C. in Egypt; 200 B.C. in Rome); the equivalent period in our own civilization is A.D. 1800-2000.

The wars of this final period destroy Democracy. It is replaced by the Force Men of the Chinese Han Dynasty, the Egyptian XVIIIth Dynasty, the early Roman Empire, and possibly the Fascist Dictators. The appearance of these supermen Spengler foresaw twenty years ago while others were talking about

making the world safe for Democracy. Rhodes he had hailed as the first of the new type.

'the first man of a new age. He stands for the style of a far-reaching, Western, Teutonic and especially German future, and his phrase "expansion is everything" is the Napoleonic reassertion of the indwelling tendency of *every* Civilization that has fully ripened—Roman, Arab or Chinese. It is not a matter of choice—it is not the conscious will of individuals, or even that of whole classes or peoples that decides. The expansive tendency is a doom, something dæmonic and immense, which grips, forces into service, willy-nilly, aware and unaware.... He stands midway between Napoleon and the force-men of the next centuries, just as Flaminius, who from 232 B.C. onward pressed the Romans to undertake the subjugation of Gaul and so initiated the policy of colonial expansion, stands between Alexander and Cæsar.'

In this latter stage the world is regarded merely as spoil for the conquerors. The arts are dead and will never revive; we may as well make up our minds about that, says Spengler, and, instead of painting pictures, build steam-engines. With some relish he bids us face the facts: neither intellect nor money can save us now, 'the powers of blood, unbroken bodily forces, resume their ancient lordship. 'Race' springs forth, pure and irresistible—the strongest win and the residue is their spoil. They seize the management of the world, and the realms of books and problems petrifies or vanishes from the memory.'

It is far beyond the competence of the author to challenge this view. But in comparing it with our next theory it will be seen that the classification is right. It

has the appearance of forcing facts into agreement with a preconceived theory, so much so that the reader is reminded of the German professor Fichte, who cheerfully laid it down that 'the philosopher follows the *a priori* thread of the world-plan which is dear to him without any history; and if he makes use of history, it is not to prove anything, since his theses are already proved independently of all history.' The theory is strictly determinist and it raises the old question: do men or movements make History? According to Spengler the individual or the accidental is of no account. But Frenchmen (not to mention Englishmen) distrust such transcendental philosophies. 'We do not believe,' says Bergson, 'in the "unconscious" in History; the "great, subterranean currents of thought," of which there has been so much talk, only flow in consequence of the fact that masses of men have been carried away by one or more of their own number.'

A Study of History, by Professor A. J. Toynbee, is still unfinished, though three mighty volumes appeared in 1935. His method is not so dogmatic as Spengler's; with equal erudition he invites the reader to accompany him on his search into the origin and growth of civilizations (Spengler's cultures). He distrusts the use of metaphor as over-simplifying the complexity of the facts; but he uses analogies in a brilliant fashion to illustrate his meaning. He is not a determinist: civilizations, in his view, may, and have been, arrested by mere accident. He never underestimates the force of the great personality in changing the direction of events. In brief, his method is inductive and experimental; Spengler's is deductive and transcendental.

He casts his net wider. Out of some 650 societies he distinguishes twenty-one which have achieved civiliza-

tion. These he classifies as follows: two wholly unrelated, having neither progenitors nor descendants—the Egyptian and the Andean (Aztec); four unrelated to earlier civilizations—the Chinese, Minoan, Sumerian and Mayan; four related to both earlier and later cultures, the Indic, Syriac, Hittite and Hellenic; five affiliated and still existing, the Western, the Orthodox Christian (East European), Japanese, Arabic and Hindu; as to the remainder our knowledge is insufficient. It is to be noted that these civilizations differ in *kind*, not in *degree*, though some have certainly proved more successful in solving the problems of existence than others, and so can be justifiably called higher. He parts company with Spengler in believing that there is no guarantee that any will live out a whole existence. Fourteen have already vanished, and the others may do the same: 'It still remains possible and indeed probable that none of the seven is destined to see the Promised Land..., the Human Race itself may become extinct without the goal ever having been attained at all.'

To illustrate his view of Progress he uses the analogy of regarding History as a One-Way Street, the whole length of which has still to be traversed: fourteen civilizations 'have come to grief by reversing, in defiance of the rule, before they completed their transit and then either colliding with one another or being warned off the road as dangers to the public. As for the seven which are yet to be seen on the street at the moment, we will not attempt, off hand, to ascertain which of them are already backsliding and which, if any, are still obeying the law of civilizations by moving forward.'

What is the cause of the genesis of Civilization?

Gobineau thought that the Aryan Race was responsible. Toynbee dismisses this as unscientific, since no such thing as a pure race exists. Environment and climate, the theory put forward by Buckle a hundred years ago, is equally disproved by the facts. If it were true, similar conditions would produce similar societies. But this is not the case; if a civilization arose in the Nile Valley, why not in that of the Rio Grande? No, says Toynbee, such theories are too simple and too materialistic; we must find a more subtle solution which covers all the facts. Such, he suggests, is a theory of Challenge and Response. In the case of indigenous, unrelated civilizations, a sudden change in the economic-geographical situation necessitates an active Response on the part of the inhabitants in order to maintain life at all. Necessity is the mother of invention. Having successfully taken the first steps to salvation in adapting themselves to their new situation, the later stages are made with much more ease. In the case of the Nile Valley, when the Libyan grasslands became desert some of the inhabitants had the courage to plunge 'into the jungle swamps of the valley bottoms, never before penetrated by Man, which their dynamic act was to turn into the land of Egypt.'

The appearance of a new civilization out of an old one is a more difficult phenomenon to explain. Yet here again the same principle holds good. As soon as a civilization begins to lose its vitality it disintegrates into two parts—a minority which strives to maintain its rule by the use of force, and a slave majority which wakes up to the fact that it has a soul to save and power to challenge the oppressors. Out of this conflict a new, 'related' civilization is born, which borrows something in the process from its parent or antecedent civilization.

The link in our own case was the Christian Church which won the allegiance of the lower classes in the Roman Empire; the Church, as its history in the Dark Ages proves, has 'served as the chrysalis within which the younger society has come into existence and gradually taken shape.'

A similar solution is applied to the problems of the growth of civilizations. They grow by virtue of their success in evolving fresh Responses to fresh Challenges. This is only true 'if, as the series (of challenges) proceeds, the action tends to shift from the field of external environment (e.g. the conquest of Nature) to the for *intérieure* of the growing personality or the growing civilization.... Growth means that the growing personality or civilization tends to become its own environment and its own challenge and its own field of action. In other words, the criterion of growth is progress towards self-determination.'

How are these vital Responses made? Toynbee, who never underestimates the work of great leaders, suggests that at certain crises men of superior quality appear to inspire devoted minorities with a solution to the immediate problem confronting society. They need not necessarily appear when a crisis threatens, but they are apt to do so and in this way leave their mark on history. Many such examples can be quoted—St. Paul, St. Benedict, Buddha, Confucius, Lenin, etc.

Toynbee's analysis of the causes of the decline of civilizations has not yet been completed. But from this bare and inadequate summary we can see that his view of the causes of historical development, difficult as it may appear at first sight, is at once wider and more subtle than Spengler's. There is no rigid or transcendental predestination here: man is master of his fate

only so long as he acts intelligently enough to meet the challenges of circumstances. Such a view is by no means pessimistic. The One-Way Street lies open before us, provided we continue to surmount the obstacles as they arise.

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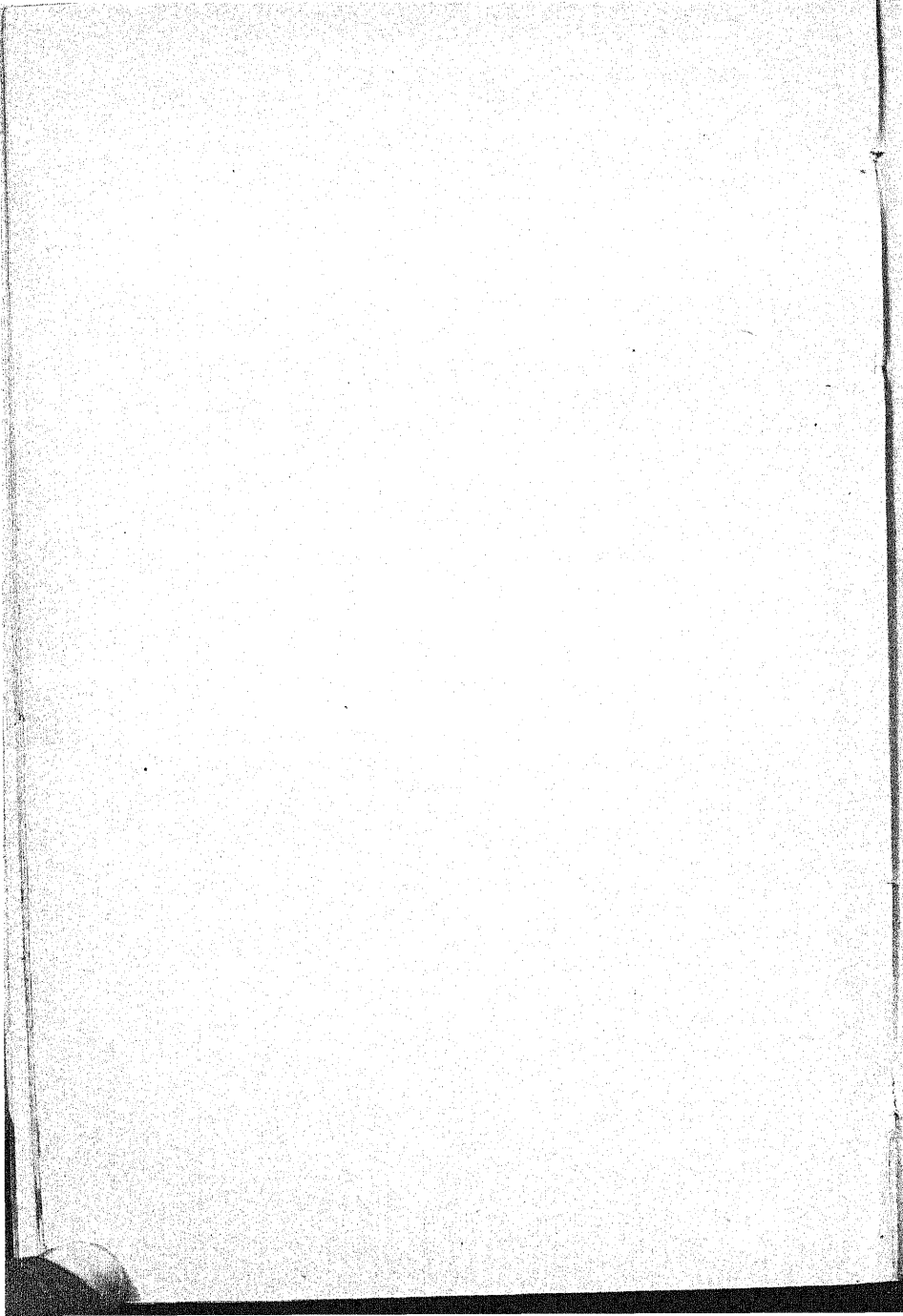
APPENDIX

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. What is the most important element in the formation of a nation?
2. Write an essay on Patriotism.
3. Is the idea of Nationalism compatible with the existence of an International order?
4. Compare the theory of National Sovereignty with the theory of Natural Law.
5. Write a defence of the League of Nations against an imaginary opponent.
6. What do you regard as the greatest danger to peace to-day?
7. Do you think a World State is a possibility or a desirability?
8. Write a defence of Imperialism.
9. Explain the distinction between a Dominion and a Colony.
10. Compare the British Empire in India with the Roman Empire in Britain.
11. Write an essay on Censorship.
12. Explain what is meant by Rights and Duties in politics.
13. Liberty of Opinion. Discuss the questions raised on page 78.
14. Discuss the benefits and drawbacks of Party government.
15. Should voting be made compulsory?
16. 'The Jury system is absurd.' Discuss.
17. 'Democracy does not and cannot exist.' Do you agree?
18. 'An enlightened aristocracy is better than an uneducated democracy.' Do you agree? (N.B. Aristocracy may be interpreted as government by experts.)

19. 'For forms of government let fools contest,
Whate'er is best administered is best.' (Pope)
20. Explain why Democracy is the political system of Individualism.
21. Write an attack on Utilitarianism.
22. 'The principle of the Inward Light, to which some Methodists pretend, is totally incompatible with political and social security' (Dr. Johnson). Explain.
23. Kant called the theory of the Social Contract 'a mere idea of reason.' Explain this statement and show the utility of the theory in the development of Democracy.
24. Are strikes justifiable?
25. In what sense are all men equal?
26. 'Every society has a right to preserve peace and order, and therefore has a good right to prohibit the propagation of opinions which have a dangerous tendency' (Dr. Johnson). Do you agree?
27. 'Capitalism has been tried and found wanting.' Discuss.
28. Which is the more valuable, Liberty or Equality? Can they exist together?
29. Do you think Socialism is desirable or possible?
30. To what extent do you think the Materialist explanation of History is true?
31. 'There are no causes in history in the sense in which we understand the word in reference to the physical sciences. There are only responsible persons.' (Cristiani). Discuss.
32. Do Men or Movements make history?
33. 'Marxian Socialism must always remain a portent to the historian of opinion—how a doctrine so illogical and so dull can ever have exercised so powerful an influence over the minds of men, and through them, the events of history.' (J. M. Keynes). Discuss.
34. Does the class war theory explain the true nature of historical development? To what extent does it correspond with the realities of the present day?

35. Compare the arguments for a democratic state with those for an authoritarian state.
36. 'No man rises so high as he who knows not whither he is going' (Cromwell). Describe the story of Mussolini's life in the light of this maxim.
37. Give the arguments for and against Dictatorship as a method of government.
38. 'Despotism is a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians, provided the end be their improvement and the means justified by actually effecting that end' (Mill). Comment.
39. Mussolini's motto is 'Live Dangerously.' How far should this be the aim of the statesman and how far that of the private individual?
40. Has Plato's ideal of the Philosopher King ever been realized?
41. Are 'political lies,' as Plato called them, ever justified? Give examples of their use in war-time.
42. Write on the dangers of propaganda with reference to the inventions of modern science.
43. Can Fascism and Communism be called theories of Dictatorship?
44. What political party do you support? Write a short political speech in defence of your opinions.
45. 'Geography governs History' (Trevelyan). Illustrate.
46. Write an essay on Reading History Backwards.
47. Is History a science?
48. Is the idea of Progress a figment of man's imagination?
49. What debt does European civilization owe to Greece and Rome? To what extent do you think that debt is superficial?
50. By what qualities in a society would you define the existence of civilization?



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